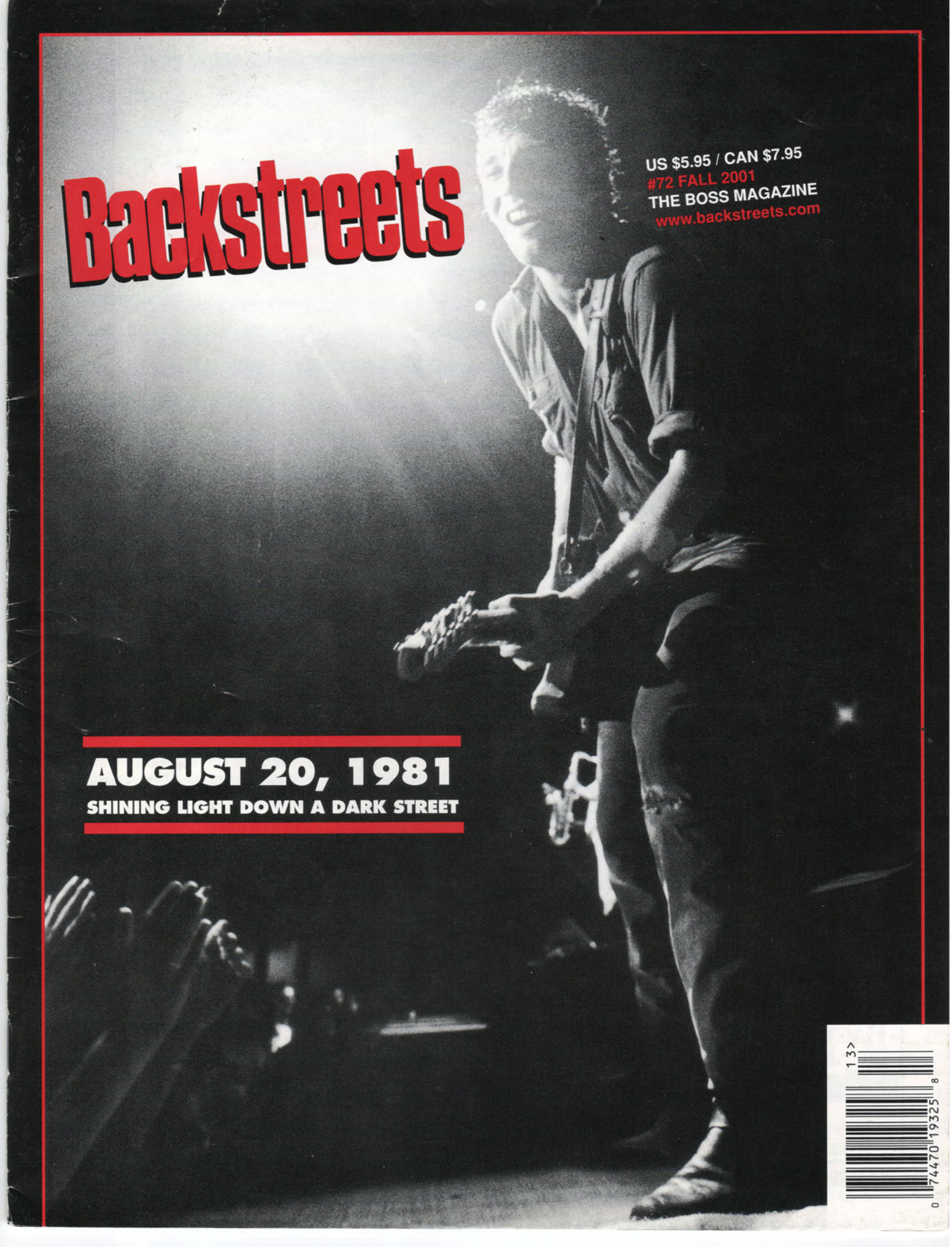
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#72 FALL 2001
THE BOSS MAGAZINE
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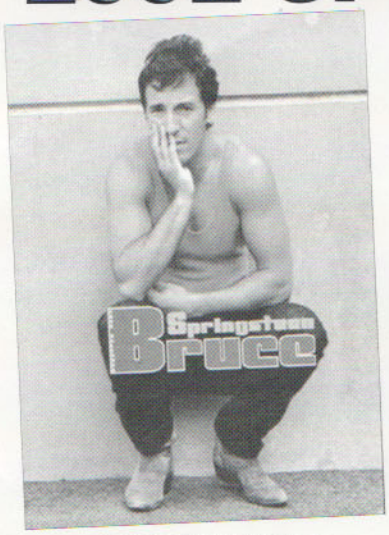
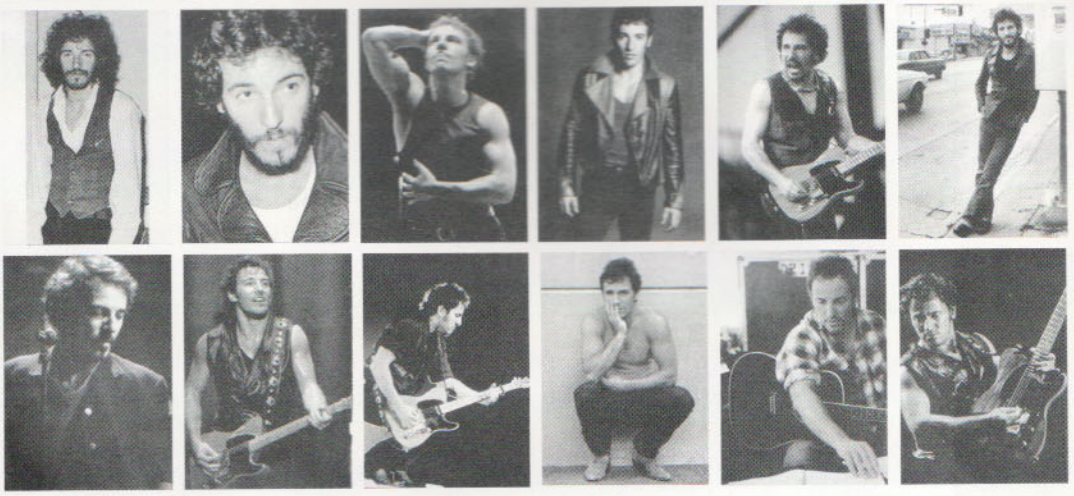
AUGUST 20, 1981
SHINING LIGHT DOWN A DARK STREET

2002 SPRINGSTEEN CALENDAR





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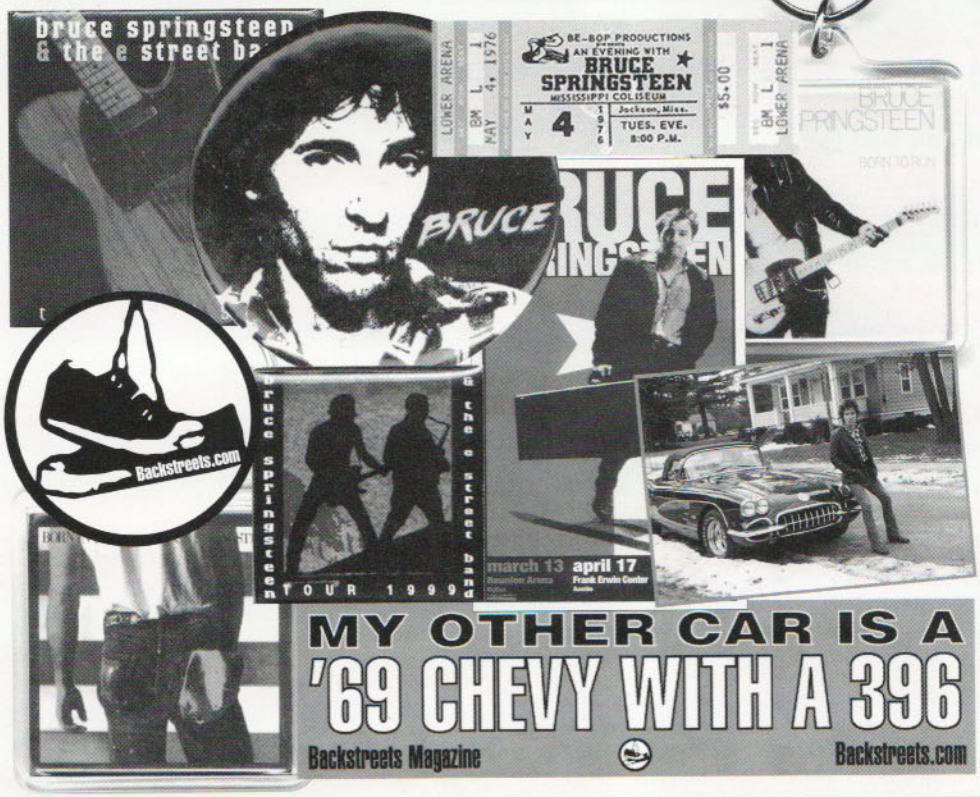

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Publisher & Editor
Christopher Phillips

Senior Editor
Charles R. Cross

Assistant Editor
Andrew E. Massimino

Associate Editors
Erik Flannigan, Jonathan B. Pont, Robert Santelli

Contributors
Robert Bader, Rich Breton, Robert Crane, René van Diemen, David DuBois, Lynn Elder, Jared Houser, Lisa Iannucci, Josh Jacobson, Phil and Steve Jump, Paul Kaytes, John J. Kelly, Magnus Lauglo, Ken Lesnik, Bob Makin, Fred Mills, Jon Phillips, P. Jay Plutzer, Maggie Powell, Jim Ragsdale, Bernie Ranellone, Debra L. Rothenberg, Arlen Schumer, Mary Schuh, James Shive, Billy Smith, Mark Stricherz, Mark Sullivan, Stacie Tobin, Salvador Trepat, Bob Zimmerman, and many others whose help is essential.

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THE BACK STREETS

This is a prayer...

Souls of the Departed

By Charles R. Cross

On Tuesday September 11, 2001 I had planned to get up early and write a column for this magazine about the 1981 Vietnam Veterans show. One thing good about having a toddler who doesn't sleep through the night, is that you never have to set an alarm—you're guaranteed to wake up before you even want to. My son woke up with bad dreams at 6 a.m. Pacific Time. I gave him a bottle, and despite my intention to get up early and work, I fell back asleep.

Almost as soon as I had fallen asleep again, the phone rang with the news of the events on the East Coast. To call those events tragic seems an understatement, since even in my own worst dreams I couldn't imagine such horror. Due to the way publishing deadlines work, you will all be reading this several weeks after that fateful morning, and it will probably still seem horrific. But I am writing this on Wednesday, September 12, 2001, when the wound is still fresh, the shock of this event still ever-present, and disbelief still strong.

Even the words "shock" and "wound" seem in some ways presumptuous to write since almost any emotion my words could capture rings hollow compared to the real-life human drama of those with family members injured or killed in the acts of terrorism on Tuesday morning. At this point to write about anything else—to even suggest the importance of something like the Vets show of 1981—seems disingenuous. It is common with tragedies of this sort to go through stages of grief beginning with shock, then denial, then sadness, and finally—God willing—some degree of acceptance. But then what do I know about this kind of event or this kind of grief?

In the last day I've been unable to move out of shock; unable to free myself of the images that keep repeating in my head like some cruel endless loop; to stop playing the make-believe video that my imagination creates out of what must have been the last moments for those who perished and suffered doing so. All I can do in times like this is pray for some understanding of events that seem impossible to understand and to pray for those whose suffering seems like its own kind of impossibility. I also thank God for the ability to even feel these emotions, however hard they are. The sad truth of my life is that in the past I retreated from real emotion on many occasions and anesthetized myself when I felt I couldn't handle the present.

And today—even in the grief, sadness, and disbelief—there have been moments where I have felt touched and where my horror has been mixed with more uplifting emotions. When a friend from New York called and told me that New Yorkers had lined up on the sides of the West Side Highway and were cheering the rescue workers as they headed towards the scene, it brought tears to my eyes—I know New Yorkers' reputation for letting nothing faze them. And when I heard that the Red Cross didn't need any more blood—so many people had donated blood that storing the donations had become a logistical problem—I was reminded that it is in times like these when the best qualities of our human nature come forth. Another friend of mine, who has been going through a deep depression during the past few months, called me sounding elated. He had spent the afternoon collecting money for the Red Cross, and his efforts made him feel better about himself and this world than any drug that had been prescribed for him during his depression.

There have even been some moments involving this magazine that have reminded me of the bond of humanity that unites all of us. *Backstreets* is located in Washington D.C., and though the office is several miles away from the Pentagon, hearing something was wrong in D.C. made me grab the phone. I live in Seattle, so I was one of the many trying to call both D.C. and New York to make sure everything was okay with those I loved and cared about. When I finally got Chris on the phone, I was relieved to hear he and Andrew were fine, and as I suspected they were miles from the carnage.

But even in that relief, I felt some small level of both guilt and compassion, realizing that many others were not so lucky—those they cared about were not okay. In so many ways, none of us in America were "okay," and I wonder at this point when we will ever feel a sense of safety again. Chris told me he'd been deluged with e-mails from people wanting to make sure that *Backstreets* staffers were safe, or writing to tell him that they were fine despite being close to the catastrophes.

But Chris also reported something that again caused me to pause. He'd gotten numerous e-mails from people all over the world who even though they were nowhere near the events—in different countries, and sometimes cultures. They had wanted the people of the United States to know they suffered with us. The wound from this attack is shared by people in Turkey, and Australia, and Singapore, and countless other locales, as our e-mail would tell you. It is one thing to hear that from the leaders of governments—it is another to hear it from a teenaged girl on the other side of the globe who can't understand the hate in this world.

The list of people who died in this tragedy is still being sorted out. Chris and I realized today that with the number of subscribers to this magazine who live and work in lower Manhattan, there is a good possibility that at least one of our subscribers may have been among victims. That may seem a tenuous connection, but it is still the kind that goes through your mind during times like these, times when you search for connection. I remember when I was the publisher of this magazine, each year we'd get copies of *Backstreets* returned from the post office for a variety of reasons. Each year there would inevitably be one or two people whose issues came back stamped by the post office as "deceased." That solemn stamp would always make me wonder about what happened to those lost members of our community—there were rarely answers to be found. And there are few answers still about the events of September 11, 2001.

This morning I did blast my stereo with the sounds of the Vietnam Veterans show from 1981. There was something about a loud rendition of "Who'll Stop the Rain" that diminishes any hurt. And there was something about the comments that Bruce Springsteen made that special night that I find help me in this troubled time. Springsteen's words about Vietnam have some relevance about these recent events—at least they do for me, someone who struggles to stay emotionally present, to be in the pain and not retreat from it.

The words can stand on their own as a call for all of us to face the present—and do our best to help—without retreat: "It's like when you feel like you're walking down a dark street at night, and out of the corner of your eye, you see somebody getting hurt, somebody getting hit in a dark alley, but you keep walking on, because you think it don't have nothin' to do with you—you just want to get home.... Unless we are able to walk down those dark alleys, and look into the eyes of the men and women who are down there, we are never going to be able to get home." May you, and all those you love, get home.

letter from the editors

In this issue's "On the Backstreets" column, Charley mentions the abundance of letters and e-mails we received at *Backstreets*. As we put this issue to bed, a mere three weeks since September 11, those letters remain foremost in our minds. The outpouring truly came as a surprise—to us, certainly, but even to some of those who wrote. Several started with something like, "I'm not even sure why I'm writing to *Backstreets*..." or "I don't know why rock music should matter at a time like this..."

But it still does, doesn't it?

Like many people around the world, we've had to question the significance of what we do from day to day. It all pales in comparison to the astonishing heroism of those on United Flight 93, who gave their lives to protect others, or to the tireless efforts of police officers, firefighters and rescue workers. For the millions of us who came out relatively unscathed, carrying on with our lives in the wake of the tragedy requires an evaluation of what we can do, and what's important—whether it's giving blood, offering a prayer, donating money, or just taking care of each other. But through it all, we continue to find both solace and inspiration in music like "We Shall Overcome" and "My City of Ruins." In 1984, Springsteen described rock 'n' roll as "my connection to the rest of the human race." And in the end, that's one of the things we can still do—stay connected.

The idea of community has always been an important one to both Springsteen and his fans. We've seen the real-world effects, from fans who put together and contribute to online charity auctions, to tapers donating to the Parkinsons Disease Foundation. Some of us have found courage, some pen pals and close friends, others have found spouses. As fans, we've been drawn together by Springsteen's music, found friendship there, and found the tools and inspiration to improve the other communities of which we're also a part. Recent events are a reminder that we each have several communities—from family and friends, to neighborhoods, to online bulletin boards, to a world community. And yes, there is a Springsteen community. We're honored and comforted to be a part of it—as, we hope, are you.

We originally planned to use this space to thank everyone who contributed to this issue. As always, it's a community effort. It's impossible to cover all of Springsteen's appearances ourselves, let alone the impromptu ones. So many fans and readers have been great about making sure we have the latest news, and we do count on our readership, our friends, and fellow community members who pitch in. So to everyone who dropped us a line with news, photos, or to help us with our coverage in any way: many thanks.

But we need to add to that list. We give our heartfelt appreciation to everyone who had us in their thoughts, and to all those—in the U.S. and around the world—who were concerned about their fellow fans. Just a few days ago, we received an address change from a subscriber who used to receive *Backstreets* at Two World Trade Center, 82nd floor. If you've been affected by the tragic events of September 11, know that you've not only been in our thoughts and prayers, but in those of the Springsteen community from around the world. Community is where you find it, and as you'll see in the letters on the next few pages, we've found it here.

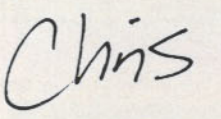
It's sheer coincidence that this issue spotlights the Vets show, a landmark moment when Springsteen reached out with his music specifically to help those in need. We've been planning this 20-year retrospective for the better part of a year, largely due to Associate Editor Jonathan Pont's passion for the 8/21/81 performance. But what better time to revisit that night—a high watermark in Springsteen's long record of stepping up for those in need and using his music to make a difference. As Springsteen stepped up once more to perform "My City of Ruins" for the *America: A Tribute to Heroes* telethon, we were again reminded that rock music does have the power to heal, to effect change, and to make a difference in the world.

We're sometimes made to think that rock 'n' roll is inherently trivial. But we know better. We've blasted "Badlands" and "Land of Hope and Dreams." We've gained strength from "The Promised Land," and acted on its exultation. Bob Muller knew better too; as he said in 1981, "It is rock 'n' roll that is going to provide the healing process that everybody needs." Twenty years later, thankfully, rock 'n' roll hasn't had to bear that burden alone. But it's doing its part, and we're grateful.

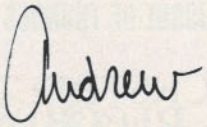
In times like these, when one of our communities is hurting, it's only natural to reach out to the others for comfort, for hope and perspective. We look for people around whom we can assemble, in practice and in spirit. When we spoke with singer-songwriter Patty Griffin a couple of weeks ago, she had this to say about Bruce:

"I feel like he just doesn't let you give up. You know what I mean? Life is really hard—hard for most people, it's hard for *all* of us. Suffering is just part of the game, there's no avoiding it. And you really just want to go numb out and not feel anything anymore. And I feel like Springsteen, since I can remember, has been this source of strength for me. He's my poet. He's my one person that I always go back to, and he helps me get my feet on the ground. He doesn't let you give up your heart. He keeps on going out there and putting his heart out there. The landscape is very cold on the radio for music. It's not very passionate at all. It's very rare to find it, and I just think that Springsteen sticks on his path, which is very humble and full of heart. It's always there. I'm just so thankful that I'm alive—now—and I have that."

Perhaps now more than ever, that ain't no sin.



Christopher Phillips
Editor



Andrew Massimino
Assistant Editor

LETTERS

Dear Editor:

Everyone on the planet knows what happened last Tuesday—an incredible tragedy for the people of your nation, and a terrific, sad event for the people of the civilized world. Believe me, it's difficult to me to find the words in Italian. So, I would like to say some things to you and to the people working with you at the *Backstreets* website, as a little bridge between Italy and the U.S.A. Many things that make better my life are from the U.S.A. Bruce, of course... all the movies of Stanley Kubrick... the crazy stories "on the road" of Jack Kerouac... "Blowin' in the Wind" and "Forever Young"... the love and passion for the workers of John Steinbeck... the visions and the world of Philip Kindred Dick... *The Godfather*... *Taxi Driver* and *Raging Bull*.... I can continue, but there is a thing that is more important than the others: the face of my father when he speaks about the Second World War. You can read in his eyes a deep emotion when he speaks about the day that the Americans gave to the Italian people freedom from the Nazi-Fascism.

Giovanni Berti
Rome, Italy

As a reader of your web page I wish to express my deepest condolences to all of you in the wake of the tragedy that has occurred. I feel nothing but sorrow. I am at a loss for words. Please know that you are all in our prayers and that you are not going through this alone. I bow my head in respect for the thousands of people affected by this crime on humanity.

Lars Oddvar Flugsrud
Oslo, Norway.

As I frequently do with events in my life and the world at large, I turn to Springsteen's music for comfort and perspective. Although nothing anybody can do or say can make sense of the enormous tragedy, I think "Badlands" is the closest song I can come up with that gives me inspiration and hope that America will recover from this horrific event. Bruce's rendition of "War" rings a little hollow right now. Bruce's music has always has embodied American values, and I'm sure you can draw comfort and perspective from countless Springsteen songs, but "Badlands" seems to speak the most to me right now: "Keep pushin' till it's understood and these badlands start treating us good."

Randy Griffey
via e-mail

To all at *Backstreets*, the Springsteen community, and all of the U.S.A.: I am from Australia and would just like to say that all our thoughts are with all of you in this most horrific time. Over here we are physically untouched by what has happened; even so, we are just like you—we watch friends on TV, we listen to Bruce and the band, we think this can't happen to us. The truth is that even "Down Under" we are afraid, for ourselves, our families, and our way of life. I know it may not mean much in the face of what you have seen, but Australia is ever your friend.

Scott Preece
NSW, Australia

A friend of mine is still missing from Tower number two. I've had a hard time seeing his wife and talking with his young kids (ages three, six and eight) and explaining "what the bad man did." When I first arrived at his house I found his wife in the kitchen and his brother and father watching TV. On their CD player they had "The Price You Pay" and "Born in the U.S.A." on a loop—I guess it was a way for them to connect with him. It has been too much for them and me to endure. I hold out hope that if he is under the rubble his "SPRINGSTEEN: Live at the Bottom Line" poster that was hanging in his office is close by, and that some day we can all play "Land of Hope and Dreams." No retreat, no surrender...

Name withheld by request
via e-mail

I'm a *Backstreets* subscriber from Spain. I write to express my condolences to all the American subscribers for the criminal attack on your country, and to all the decent people in the world. I was watching the TV with my girlfriend and I didn't believe the images that I was seeing—it was like a nightmare, but it's real. We only think of all the people that were in the building at that moment, and I pray for us. I can't express all the thoughts that I'm feeling now because I don't write very well in English, but I need to write to you and give all my support to the United States "Blood Brothers." I pray for you, for the police/firemen/rescue workers/volunteers in New York and Washington, for finding all the survivors, and for all the victims and their families. God Bless!

Albert Amorós
Spain

I just wanted to tell you about the video that was run on NBC TV of Bruce singing "We Shall Overcome." It has been run almost every other hour on WNBC, and three times nationally. Tom Brokaw introduced it. The video is very moving and shows images of New York City.... I have gotten letters from so many people saying how soothing the song—and hearing Bruce sing it—is right now.

Jim Musselman
Appleseed Records
via e-mail

I hope all you guys are all well, physically and mentally. I guess Washington and New York are difficult cities in which to live and work these days. What happened is just incomprehensible—even for someone who lives in Belfast. Take care of yourselves, and keep taking care of each other. There will be better days.

Brendan Mulgrew
Belfast

I guess it bears mentioning that Bruce Springsteen probably won't, out of respect for the victims Tuesday, be singing "Darlington County" anymore: "...our pas each own one of the World Trade Centers, for a kiss and a smile I'll give mine all to you."

Albert Zimmerman
via e-mail

Just heard about the upcoming Network Telethon on the news and then clicked on your site—sure enough, you had the info up and running for all Springsteen fans everywhere. I very much appreciate your diligent work during these trying times and hope you and your staff realize

THUNDER ROAD

Thunder Road
Last Issue Collector's Item!
The River LP & Tour 1980-81
Springsteen Solo LP Nebraska
Roy Bittan Interview
Rare Photos & Vintage Posters

The first Springsteen fanzine, *Thunder Road*, stopped publishing in the early '80s after only a handful of issues, but they were an inspiration to *Backstreets* and remain great collectibles and great reads, too. This double issue was the magazine's swan song and probably its best. *Thunder Road* #6/7 is a huge 64-page issue packed with solid writing and beautiful photos. We've scored the very last stack of these and can offer them at a lower price than we've seen before, but when they're gone, that's it. Especially at this price, it's a must have.

FINAL ISSUE OF THUNDER ROAD.....$10

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how much we appreciate it; it's truly a source of comfort to know Bruce's music will be always be enjoyed by millions. I am one of many, I'm sure, who look forward to making a donation for the victims' and rescuers' families on behalf of Bruce and in honor of his birthday Sunday. Thanks very much, from a loyal fan and subscriber-for-life.

Laura Rodriguez
via e-mail

To all at *Backstreets* magazine; to Bruce, the E Street Band and their families and friends; to the people of America: You are in our thoughts and our prayers. God bless, on behalf of all of Bruce's many fans in the United Kingdom.

Richard Harris
London, England

As a long time Springsteen and American Rock fan and as a human being, I wish to participate in your grief. No words can express the anger and the sorrow that we feel.

Moshe Zwiebel
Israel

I'm writing to thank you for referring to "We Shall Overcome" on your website. I was poring through my music collection last week, and wasn't finding much that actually "hit the spot", even in Bruce's stuff. "Land of Hope and Dreams," of course, and maybe the acoustic "Promised Land." I bought the Seeger collection when it came out and was haunted by the song then. However, it gained a whole new dimension after last week. Advice for fans: get the collection. Besides "We Shall Overcome," there are great offerings by Ani DiFranco and other folk singers. Some, especially the Irish singers (Tommy Makem comes to mind), may not be household names, but they're worth knowing. (Some of them can tell some terrorism stories. We should be listening anyway.) For when we need a little humor there are kids' songs, and Tom Paxton singing the old "Get Up and Go" for anyone who's getting older (not me, of course!) Hold on, everyone. We've got to learn to live with what we can't rise above.

Kathy Corcoran
via e-mail

I cannot ignore the tragedy that has struck the U.S. It is difficult to find words that go beyond indignation and consternation. I can only say that the shock here in Europe is immense as if the attack had struck the old continent itself, and in some ways it is so. Yesterday's act of terrorism is a crime against all of humanity, and I'm sure that people all over the world today feel a strong sense of solidarity with the American people, a solidarity through which civilization and democracy may defeat this new barbarism.

Laura Barberi
Rome, Italy

We in Denmark want to express our sorrow and grief for the tragedy—the horrible crime—that took place in your country. Everybody is deeply shocked, and today the entire nation will sit down or stand still wherever they are for two minutes silence at noon to show our sympathy with the American people and their loss.

Henrik Elmelund
Denmark

I have really no words about what happened in NYC and Washington. I feel a great pain and sorrow inside for all the victims and the survivors. Something horrible has happened; since two days ago, days our lives are no longer the same. Last night I was sitting on my sofa watching the news on TV with my three-year-old daughter sleeping beside me. Watching the screen showing those terrible pictures over and over again I wondered what kind of future we're leaving to our children, and

Continued page 32

CORRECTIONS:

•As opposed to RIAA gold and platinum certifications (which count double CD sets as two units, triples as three, etc.), SoundScan counts actual units sold. So the SoundScan sales figures of *Live in New York City* translate directly to the number of fans buying the set. ["On the Backstreets, #71]

•Jeff Kazee's new CD is entitled *No River*. Kazee writes, "While I wish I was the creator of *The River*, I am content to have created *No River*." The album can be ordered at www.kazeemusic.com. ["Greetings," #71]

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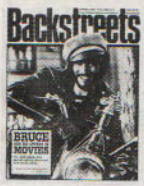

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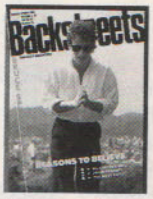

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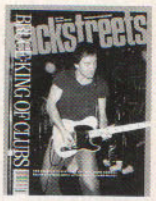

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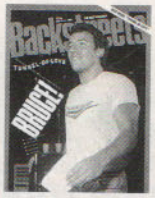

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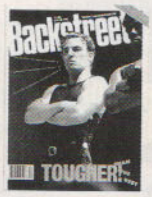

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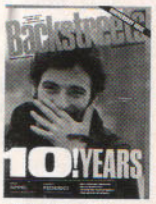

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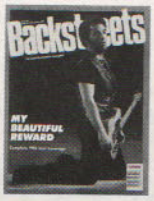

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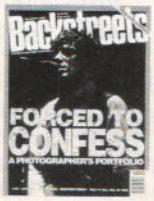

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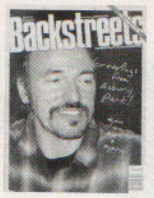

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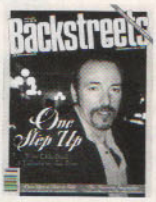

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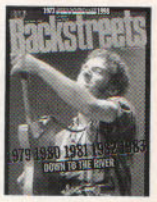

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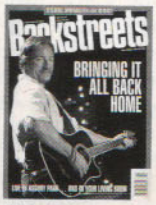

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Springsteen rises up, pays tribute

For Those Gone On

By Christopher Phillips

On Friday, September 21, *America: A Tribute to Heroes* was an unprecedented collaboration—by major U.S. television networks as well as entertainers—to benefit those affected by the September 11 tragedy. Bruce Springsteen led off the night, performing his recent composition, "My City of Ruins."

As the *Tribute* telethon began, the first image millions of viewers saw after a New York City skyline was Springsteen, acoustic guitar at the ready, surrounded by clusters of lighted candles. Tom Hanks followed this performance with the first of the night's many speeches, but the first words were Springsteen's: "This is a prayer for our fallen brothers and sisters."

With backing vocalists including fellow E Streeters Little Steven, Patti Scialfa, and Clarence Clemons, Springsteen's impassioned reading of "My City of Ruins" served as both elegy and inspiration. Though originally written last year for Asbury Park—and previously performed three times, all within the A.P. city limits—"My City of Ruins" speaks to the tragedy as if it were inspired directly by the devastation in New York. Springsteen only altered the song slightly for the telethon, changing "the hustlers and thieves" to "the empty streets." To most, its invocation of recent loss must surely have made it seem written for the occasion. Its call to "rise up" echoed what so many of this nations' citizens, police officers, firefighters, and rescue workers have already done. The closing refrain of "with these hands," in addition to suggesting work to be done, became a call of prayer for those lost in the attack and those still suffering in its aftermath.

The September 21 performances aired live from several locations; "My City of Ruins" was broadcast from Sony International Recording, on the Sony Studios stage that Bruce and the newly reunited E Street Band played in 1995. Springsteen and his ensemble soundchecked the song there on September 20. The group included Scialfa's fellow "Redheaded Women," Soozie Tyrell and Lisa Lowell, who were there when "My City" was debuted in Asbury Park on December 17, 2000. Also singing back-up were Dee and Layonne Holmes, members of Holiday Express, a Monmouth County, NJ-based charitable organization that has performed holiday concerts and delivered meals and gifts to those in need since 1993.

Other highlights of the broadcast included Neil Young's performance of John Lennon's "Imagine" at the piano; Billy Joel's "New York State of Mind"; U2's "Peace on Earth/Walk On"; Eddie Vedder with Neil Young on "Long Road," and Willie Nelson leading the West Coast ensemble in "America the Beautiful."

All performers donated their time and services, and costs were underwritten by ABC, NBC, CBS and FOX, as well as the United Way. All proceeds from the event—$150 million is the initial figure—go to the September 11 Telethon Fund to benefit the thousands of victims and their families, administered by the United Way. Pledges can still be made at tributetoheroes.org, and by mail at September 11 Telethon Fund, P.O. Box 203103, Houston, TX 77216-3103.

Live DVD Coming Nov. 6

Emmy nods for original concert special

Well over a year after the 2000 Madison Square Garden stand was filmed, the announcement came on September 10. *Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band - Live in New York City*, a DVD set culled from the tour-closing stand, has been officially announced for a November 6 release.

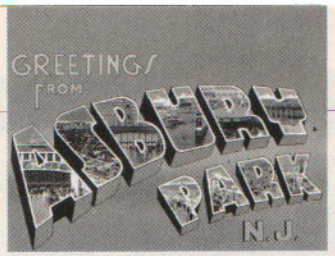
The DVD set will be an expanded version of the *Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band* HBO concert film, to comprise 25 tracks in all, on two DVDs.

The original film (14 songs) will be contained on disc one, with the following 11 songs (including the six bonus tracks from the live album, plus five more) added on a second disc: Backstreets/Don't Look Back/ Darkness on the Edge of Town/ Lost in the Flood/Born in the U.S.A./Jungleland/Light of Day/ The Promise/Thunder Road/ Ramrod/If I Should Fall Behind.

As a further bonus, "The E Street Shuffle" will also play behind the end credits. A 15-minute documentary "featurette" titled "NYC Serenade" will include performance footage of other songs, including "Adam Raised a Cain," "Back in Your Arms," and "Blood Brothers," in addition to interviews with Springsteen and the members of the E Street Band.

The original HBO special, *Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band*, was recently nominated for six Emmys, including wins for Multi-Camera Editing (Thom Zimny) and Lighting Direction (Jeff Ravitz and Gregg Maltby) given out at the Creative Arts Emmy Awards on September 8. *Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band* was also up for Sound Mixing and Technical Direction at this ceremony.

Two remaining categories, "Outstanding Variety, Music or Comedy Special" and "Outstanding Directing for a Variety or Music Program," will be awarded at the upcoming Emmy Awards ceremony. The Emmys telecast was originally scheduled for September 16 but postponed due to the attacks five days prior.



Glory days in Asbury Park

Shore Summer Jams

By Bob Makin

If Asbury Park's "glory days are coming back," as Springsteen said over Labor Day weekend, the Stone Pony is helping to lead the charge. The House That Bruce Built had a marvelous summer with numerous amazing shows, several featuring guest appearances by Bruce himself.

Memorial Day Weekend kicked the summer off with a previously reported "hurricane" of a set at the Pony, teaming Springsteen with his old cronies Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes. For Stone Pony owner Domenic Santana, the night was a milestone — the one-year anniversary of the legendary club's reopening. He released 27 balloons when Springsteen took the stage, representing the 27 years of Stone Pony history.

JOHN CAVANUGH PHOTO

MICHAELDOWNS PHOTO COURTESY OF JOE SHERMAN; FAR LEFT: JOSEPH DELCONZO

Clockwise from top: Nils and Bruce face off; the two Bruces rip it up on "Cadillac Ranch"; Clarence Clemons (with fiddler Randi Fishenfeld) makes a stand at the Pony.

One Day in August

The Boss didn't roll back into town until nearly summer's end, but when he did, man, did he make it count ... literally. He played three times in one day on August 18: in the afternoon at the 26th Annual Clearwater Festival, an annual environmental fund-raiser; with E Street guitarist Nils Lofgren at the Stone Pony later that evening; and again at the Pony with longtime Asbury scenester John Eddie later that night to close it out.

At the Clearwater Festival, Springsteen's surprise 30-minute solo acoustic set included "My City of Ruins," a song he debuted in Asbury Park last year, as "a prayer for my city," as well as "Land of Hope and Dreams," which he dedicated to Asbury Park. The set also featured "Bobby Jean," "This Hard Land," and two nuggets from his A.P.-namechecking debut LP: "Does this Bus Stop at 82nd Street" and "Blinded by the Light."

"It's great that they brought the festival here," Springsteen told the *Asbury Park Press*. "It's part of the city's revitalization." During his set, Bruce also mentioned the promising new city council that took office on July 1. That council decided to sell the tax liens of bankrupt waterfront developer Joseph Carabetta, ending a decades-long stalemate that made the boardwalk an eyesore and put a question mark on the fate of the Palace Amusements building, a recently declared national landmark made famous in "Born to Run."

After his performance, Springsteen mixed with the festival's crowd for about an hour. "I just couldn't believe it," Tim Rider of Eatontown told the *Asbury Park Press*. "As I listened, I couldn't help thinking to myself that here is someone that can fill a 90,000-

MARK LAMHUT PHOTOS

A Clearwater Close Encounter

I was at the Clearwater Festival in Asbury Park where Bruce showed up, on Saturday, August 18. After Bruce played about five songs he said, "For this next song I need help singing." I went up with about seven others and stood right next to Bruce, to his left. He started singing "Blinded by the Light." Of course, I know it all by heart. After the third verse, he turned to me, laughing, and said, "I can't believe you know all the words!"

So we continued singing, and after the "Zanzibar/shooting star" verse he turned to me and said, "You sing the next one." I was so flabbergasted my mind went completely blank, just for an instant, and I just pulled a verse we hadn't sung yet out of my head, the one starting "Some kidnapped handicap was complaining that he caught the clap."

When I finished everybody on the lawn cheered (I'm sure more because Bruce let me sing than for my voice, though I think I did pretty well!). Bruce said something like, "Didn't she skip something?" Yes, I did, but I was lucky to be semi-conscious at the point. He laughed, and I was still at the mic, so he shared the mic with me on the chorus.

—Joellen Lundy, Red Bank, NJ

seat stadium. It was so unexpected and just so great."

Springsteen apparently has been a Clearwater member for a number of years, and many of the environmental organization's staff were very excited and happy that he decided to perform. The Clearwater Festival moved to Asbury Park this year after 25 years in Sandy Hook.

It's been a little longer than that since Springsteen and his then-band, Steel Mill, played with Lofgren for the first time in San Francisco. Just like always, the E Streeter and the Boss took command of the Pony's outdoor stage. Lofgren, a native of West Orange, NJ, commented on how his entire family was in attendance. "For the first time in the history of rock 'n' roll, every single one of them bought a ticket!" he joked. He also spoke of his affection for the club, which is where he first met his wife. After about 90 minutes of spirited songs and blazing guitar solos, Nils was joined by the Boss for a few encores. "If I Should Fall Behind" has been part of Nils' recent set, and here he shared the song with its writer, in addition to "It's All Over Now," "Boom Boom," and "Shine Silently." After Nils' outdoor show, it was Eddie's turn to jam with Bruce inside the Pony, with their take on the Elvis classic "Suspicious Minds."

While he didn't get to share the stage with Bruce this time out, the evening's opener, Joe D'Urso, was psyched that he'd been on the bill for three of Springsteen's Pony appearances in the past year (including a Parkinson's Disease benefit with Joe Grushecky and a dozen local acts in November, and Southside's Memorial Day show). "Here's hoping for four when I put together a World Hunger Year show in November," D'Urso said.

The Big Man's Big Stand

At summer's end, Clarence Clemons and his band played four shows over Labor Day Weekend at the Pony. He was recording tracks for the live portion of a double disc that will include studio tracks to be recorded soon the in saxophonist's homebase of Miami. Clemons' many backstage guests included Ocean County-raised Mets pitcher Al Leiter, who still lives at the Jersey Shore, as well as one Bruce Springsteen.

Clarence and his salsa-tinged band were joined onstage by Springsteen on Saturday night, September 1, for "Pink Cadillac," "Raise Your Hand," "Mustang Sally" and "Glory Days." Before the last song, Bruce said, "Welcome to Asbury Park—the glory days are coming back."

Springsteen also was expected on Sunday night, the last of the Big Man's four-show stand, until a bomb scare thwarted plans. Reportedly, additional guests were to include Tico Torres and Melissa Etheridge. A ten-song set list would have included "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out," "From Small Things," and "Sherry Darling," in addition to other covers and the four songs from the night before. Instead, concertgoers were forced to file out of the building 90 minutes into this final set. When the Pony reopened its doors less than an hour later, Clarence and his band quite admirably pressed on to a once-again packed house. But it was clear that a show-that-might-have-been was lost.

"I wanted fireworks for Labor Day, but not this kind," Santana told the *Asbury Park Press*.

Perhaps being stymied the night before left Springsteen with some pent-up energy, as Labor Day found him on stage once more. He closed out his club-hopping Jersey Shore summer at Donovan's Reef in Sea Bright, appearing with the popular cover act Brian Kirk and the Jirks. With friends and wife, Patti Scialfa, in tow, Bruce romped with the Jerks through "Rosalita," "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out," "Mustang Sally" and "Jersey Girl."

Just up the road, this summer also found Springsteen jamming with good friend Bruce Hornsby on July 31 at the Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank. After a two-and-a-half-hour show that included Hornsby's impromptu take Springsteen's "Thunder Road," the two Bruces shared the stage for a closing "Cadillac Ranch." In a very nice touch, Springsteen did not leave the stage until shaking hands with every member of Hornsby's band.

ON STAGE

Donovan's surprise caps a busy summer

One More Time!

By Jeremy Neuer

TIMOTHY D. LAKE PHOTOS

Bruce Springsteen finished off a busy Labor Day Weekend with a raucous four-song set at Donovan's Reef in Sea Bright, New Jersey with Brian Kirk and the Jirks, a local Jersey Shore band.

Bruce and Patti Scialfa came to Donovan's, via golf cart along the beach, around 6 p.m. on Monday night to see Nick DiAco, a family friend who frequently plays with Kirk and Jirks. Brian Kirk was able to convince Bruce, without much coaxing, to join the band onstage after DiAco's guest appearance.

Once DiAco finished his two-song set, Kirk waved for Bruce to come to the stage from his perch on the sea wall. With Patti close behind, Bruce climbed onto the stage and was handed an acoustic guitar. After a brief discussion, the crowd was amazed to hear the beginning chords to "Rosalita." The band, including a three-piece horn section, dutifully followed Bruce's lead as he shared vocals with DiAco and Kirk.

Before Bruce could take off the guitar after "Rosalita," Kirk asked if he would do another. The crowd obviously was not going to settle for one song, even one as amazing as "Rosie." Bruce asked Kirk which other songs the band knew, and they settled on "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out," with Bruce handling most of vocals. Somehow during the song, Kirk told Bruce that the sax player's name was Charles, so he changed the lyrics and sang, "the change was made uptown and Charles joined the band," as well as "Scooter and Charles bust this city in half"—totally spontaneous moments, with Bruce grinning from ear to ear.

Bruce took off the guitar after "Freeze-out," and the crowd of people—no more than 150 at this seaside bar—were all going crazy. Kirk asked Bruce if he wanted to do another and suggested "Mustang Sally." Springsteen's vocals were amazing as he lead the band through this barroom favorite. He pointed to band members to take solos, including Brian Douglas, the keyboard player, who went absolutely nuts. Douglas was playing so hard that Bruce had to go over and hold the keyboard steady for him.

After "Mustang Sally," Patti whispered something into Bruce's ear. Springsteen asked Kirk a question to which he responded, "I know all the words!" Kirk, armed with his acoustic, started playing the chords for "Jersey Girl." One problem—he was playing in the wrong key. Bruce leaned over his shoulder with a priceless look that said, "Nice try, but not quite." Kirk changed to the right key and began singing the first verse, then Bruce took over the vocals for the rest of the song. When they got to the third verse, Springsteen was stuck for the lyrics, so Kirk fed him the words until he caught on.

After they finished the song, Bruce said, "Happy Labor Day, Jersey Shore!" He thanked Kirk and each member of the band and headed off the stage. As Patti made her way off stage—Scialfa sang backup on each song and took a verse during Mustang Sally—she said, "Wow—that was fun!"

Kirk, a lifelong Bruce fan, described the performance as "Easily the most exciting, intense, fantabulous moment I have ever felt while being on stage in my lifetime... I'm going to have to find myself a new dream. [Bruce] makes me proud that I, too, come from the Jersey Shore. I can't express what a feeling it was to stand a foot-and-a-half away from him as he played my guitar and sang ["Rosalita"] into my mic, one of the greatest songs ever written."

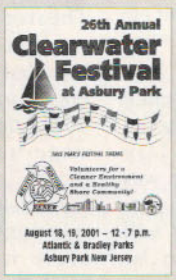
For more information on Brian Kirk and the Jirks, visit www.jirks.com.

BRUCE'S JERSEY SHORE SUMMER

July 31
Cadillac Ranch
with Bruce Hornsby and his band
Count Basie Theatre
Red Bank, NJ

August 18
Does this Bus Stop
Bobby Jean
This Hard Land
Blinded by the Light
My City of Ruins
Land of Hope and Dreams
acoustic set
Clearwater Festival
Asbury Park, NJ

August 18
If I Should Fall Behind
It's All Over Now
Boom Boom
Shine Silently
with Nils Lofgren and his band
The Stone Pony
Asbury Park, NJ



August 18
Suspicious Minds
with John Eddie
The Stone Pony
Asbury Park, NJ

September 1
Pink Cadillac
Raise Your Hand
Mustang Sally
Glory Days
with the Clarence Clemons Band
The Stone Pony
Asbury Park, NJ

September 3
Rosalita
Tenth Ave. Freeze-out
Mustang Sally
Jersey Girl
with Patti Scialfa, Brian Kirk and the Jirks
Donovan's Reef
Sea Bright, NJ

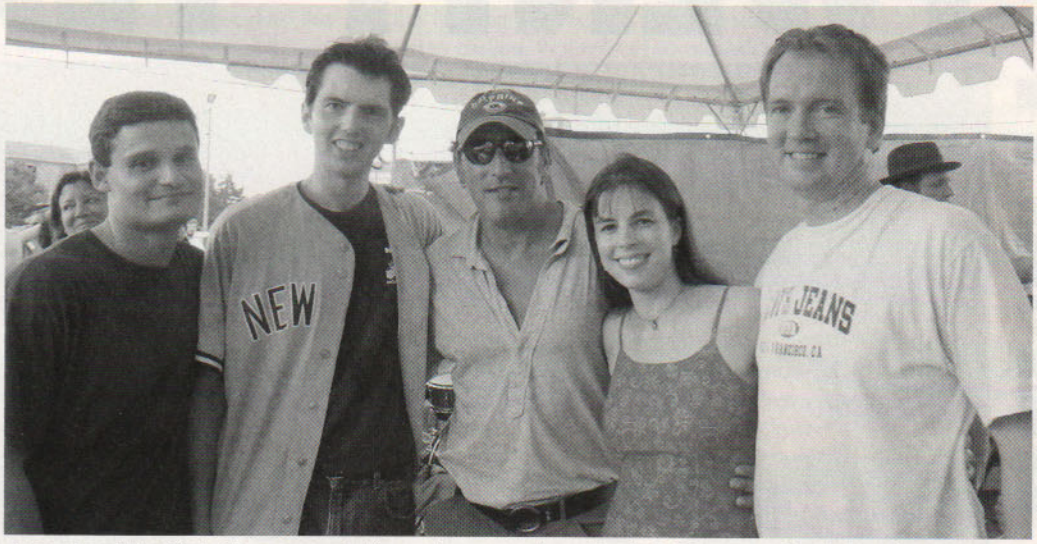
ON LIPS

SEASIDE BAR SONGS

When Springsteen took the stage at the Clearwater Festival in Asbury Park, it came as a complete surprise to most—including those who were scheduled to be on stage at that moment. That would be Jersey band the Wag, whose set was pushed back to accommodate the Boss. They weren't complaining. Bassist/vocalist Brian Ostering got to share the stage when Bruce asked if anyone wanted to join him. After Springsteen's set, the band gave him a CD and asked if he'd stick around to see them perform. Springsteen did, and he met with the band afterwards. "He gave us some advice that went like this," Ostering told writer Josh Davidson. "'Be persistent, keep plugging away. It took me ten years to get a recording contract. Your stuff is good, so keep playing it out.'" Check out their website at www.thewagband.com. . . . A couple weeks later and a few miles down the road in Sea Bright, Bruce had another surprise for a lucky few when he played with Brian Kirk and the Jirks at Donovan's Reef. As it turns out, Kirk blew a similar opportunity the day before, so this time he was ready. As an employee of the beach club told *Backstreets*, "Jon Bon Jovi stopped by on Sunday, but Brian Kirk goofed when he saw him in the audience. Brian started playing Bruce's "She's the One" instead of a Bon Jovi song. Brian has met Bon Jovi before, but just didn't think quick enough. Bon Jovi just watched Brian perform for a while on Sunday, but did not appear on stage. Bon Jovi told Bruce about this on Monday as a funny anecdote before his appearance that evening. All in all, it was a great celebrity weekend at Donovan's Reef."

CAVESTOMPIN'

Steve Van Zandt's Garage Rock crusade continues, and if you've heard his band the Lost Boys doing "Affection" on the *Peppers & Eggs* compilation, you know he's a good man to lead the charge. No word yet on when that long-lost Lost Boys LP might be issued, but in the meantime "Cavestomp!" is the watchword for Steve's garage efforts. His Renegade Nation Productions has continued co-producing the Cavestomp! series at the Village Underground. Retail chain The Wiz teamed up with Steve over the summer, helping launch the Cavestomp! Garage Rock Band Search and creating a new garage rock section in their stores. The section will feature classics of the genre and contemporary bands—handpicked by Van Zandt himself. The Wiz COO Norman Goldberg says, "The Wiz is proud to be associated with Cavestomp! and Little Steven, whose passion is contagious." Not to mention inexhaustible: in addition to working on *The Sopranos*, Steven also has a nationally syndicated garage rock radio show up his sleeve. As he told Gary Graff, "It'll be classic garage and roots of garage; I would throw in early Stones and Beatles and Kinks and the Who and Yardbirds and Animals, along with a few of the new bands. I really am a big, big fan of radio, and I miss what radio used to be when DJs had personality and they could put together their own sets of music." Amazingly enough, Steve has been able to do all this *while simultaneously* coping with his appearance on *People* magazine's recent Worst Dressed list. . . . In other E Street news, Max Weinberg gave Ringo's All Starr Band a little help at the PNC Bank Arts Center in Holmdel, NJ, drumming on, yes, "With a Little Help From My Friends.". . . Look for Danny Federici's self-titled new album, his follow-up to *Flemington*, to be released October 2 on Hip-O.



SHAYLA SPAZIANO PHOTO

Jersey band The Wag with an appreciative audience member after their Clearwater Festival performance.

COVER ME

Originally from Jersey, Pete Yorn wears well the influence of his homestate's favorite son; his Columbia debut, *musicforthemorningafter*, is well worth checking out. Yorn has not only mentioned the Springsteen influence in many interviews, but he's covering songs like "Dancing in the Dark," "Atlantic City" and "Racing in the Street" on tour, usually as intros to one of his own songs. One or two of them appear in every show, and his cover of "Dancing in the Dark" is available as a recent B-side. . . . On the other end of the must-hear spectrum, completists will want to be aware of Tribute to *Bruce Springsteen: Made in the U.S.A.*, a quickie covers compilation on Purple Pyramid label. Though there's not much to recommend here, you do get to hear Ronnie Spector's take on "Brilliant Disguise." And if you've always dreamed of hearing "Born in the U.S.A." on bagpipes, here's your chance. . . . The reunited Living Color has made a passionate "American Skin" a staple of their set. At their homecoming show in Central Park—their first NYC show since breaking up in 1995—the song made for a powerful encore. Jon Wiederhorn reported for Sonicnet: "By the end of the song, Glover was in tears, and while a cynical viewer might credit his method acting abilities for the display, his shoulders continued to heave with sobs after he left the stage.". . . Springsteen fan Mark Wright, having entertained pub crowds with Boss covers as well as his own material, has released an impressive collection called *One Way Ticket*. The CD features his version of "Two Hearts"; visit www.markwright.co.uk for more info. . . . John Anderson visits "Atlantic City" on his latest album, *Nobody's Got It All*, and look for "I Wish I Were Blind" on Australian power pop artist Michael Carpenter's latest album, *SOOP #1 - Songs of Other People*.

A PLACE IN THE STARS

Vacations in the stratosphere were only the beginning. Springsteen currently orbits the sun between Mars and Jupiter, making a full circuit every 3.26 years. Springsteen the asteroid, that is—recently discovered and so named by Dr. Ian Griffin. He told *Backstreets*, "As a Bruce fan, it seemed like a sensible thing to do!" Griffin happened to be listening to *The Ghost of Tom Joad* on the observatory stereo system on the night he discovered the asteroid. . . . Back on earth, but still in the "star" file, *People* magazine reports that Pierce Brosnan's recent wedding featured a Boss touch: "The bride and groom shared their first dance to Bruce Springsteen's 'If I Should Fall Behind.'" The song also showed up in the film *Greenfingers* this summer, the studio version playing over a key sequence toward the end of the movie. It took the better part of a decade—and maybe it took the E Street Band—but it seems that beautiful song is finally getting its due.

TWENTY YEARS

VIETNAM VETERANS BENEFIT

LOS ANGELES, CA

AUGUST 1981 - AUGUST 2001

A BACKSTREETS RETROSPECTIVE

EDITED BY CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS AND JONATHAN B. PONT

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NEAL PRESTON, IRIS SCHNEIDER, AND PETE HOWARD

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN HAD EVERY REASON to coast into a six-night run in Los Angeles in the summer of 1981. He had cracked the top-ten with "Hungry Heart," and his fifth LP, *The River,* was still near the top of the charts nearly a year after its release. In America, he had moved easily into sports arenas, playing three-hour shows to capacity crowds. In Europe, he toured the continent extensively for the first time. Springsteen returned to the United States with a handful of new songs and a shorter, more focused performance. After ten months and 120 shows, the E Street Band's musicianship was nearing a peak. On the first night in Los Angeles, they reached the summit.

That night, August 20, 1981, Springsteen performed a benefit concert for the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, a struggling non-profit organization. The group and its founder, Marine Corps veteran Bob Muller, worked to aid men and women disabled in the war. They sought changes in public policy and access to an America where they could feel like useful citizens. Initially, their efforts were greeted with indifference.

The concert marked a beginning for Springsteen: it was the first instance where he put his name behind something and explained why. Appearing at the Musicians United for Safe Energy concerts two years earlier with fellow musicians like Bonnie Raitt, Tom Petty, and Chaka Khan, he made no statement. The 8/20/81 L.A. performance would leave no doubt about where Springsteen's conscience began. His step into the world of rock 'n' roll philanthropy was a confident leap: In one of the world's entertainment meccas, Springsteen was leading a campaign of awareness.

The Vietnam War wasn't exactly off the radar screen of American popular culture. By 1978, titles ranging from Michael Herr's *Dispatches* to Ron Kovic's *Born on the Fourth of July* had been on store bookshelves. Films like *Apocalypse Now, The Deer Hunter,* and *Coming Home* soon followed. These weren't lightweight, exploitative works rushed out to capitalize on a marketing trend; rather, they were real contemplations. But as far as Muller and VVAF were concerned, America still wasn't ready to come to terms with the war and its aftermath.

Springsteen had credibility, and he was ready to exercise it. In his writing, he was rock's best articulator of life's dimensions, its joys and hardships, its realities and myths. *The River,* a twenty-song opus two years in the making, found him expanding his vision, building on themes of faith and redemption. Its songs contemplated commitment, isolation, and blue-collar life.

In concert, the music was as challenging to perform as it was get out on a record. A bevy of new songs like "Independence Day" and "Wreck on the Highway" not only begged for quiet, but also attention. After intermission, with the upbeat rock of "Cadillac Ranch," "Sherry Darling," and "Hungry Heart," it was time to party. Writing in the *Los Angeles Times,* Robert Hilburn characterized the second set of the August 20 performance "as dazzling a display of pure rock 'n' roll celebration as I've ever seen."

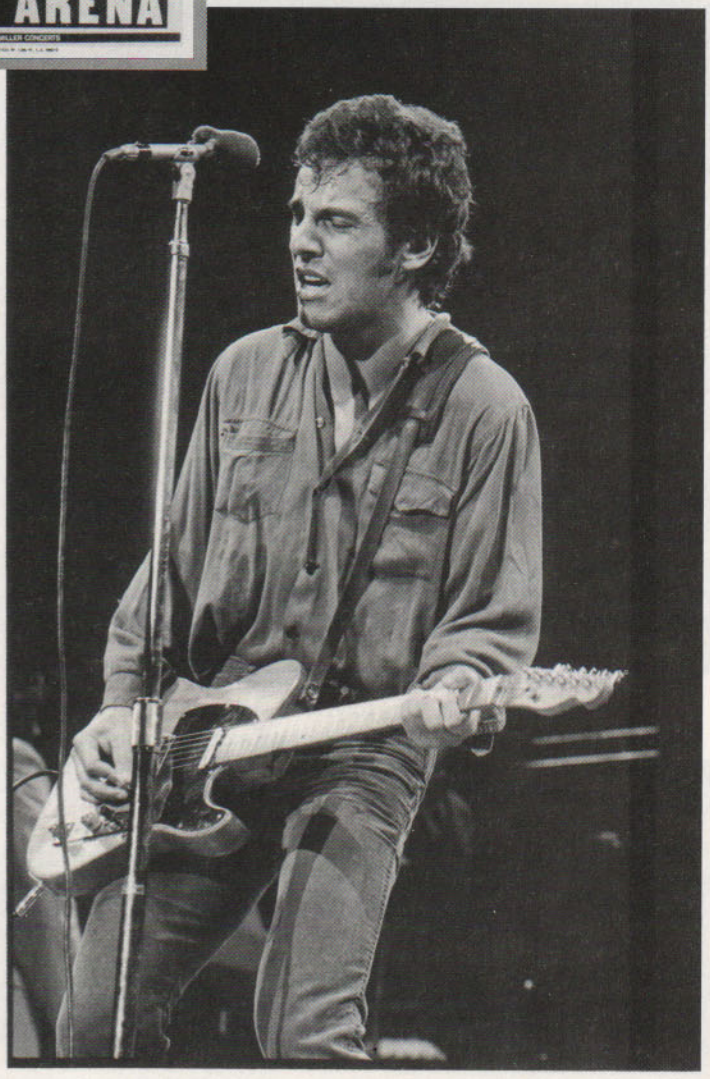
But Springsteen greeted the excited opening-night crowd without a guitar, without music. He was nervous, but sincere. As quiet fell, he likened the Vietnam War to witnessing an assault on a dark street, but walking on because it didn't concern you. "It happened once," he said, "and it can happen again." Springsteen asked the crowd to listen to Muller, who came to the center of the stage.

Muller spoke about "ending the silence" the war had engendered, and he attached to the evening a special quality: it was, he said, part of the healing process for Vietnam veterans. Rock 'n' roll was prepared to assume that role when mainstream America would not.

Springsteen responded with a performance that stands today as his most passionate. On the first four songs, he seemed to encounter the limit of his vocal range several times. Singing with the most outward display of emotion he ever brought to the concert stage, it sounded at times like he might lose it altogether. But he kept going, keeping his voice and his band on the sharpest of edges.

The opening song, "Who'll Stop the Rain," ended with Springsteen thundering that he, too, wanted to know the answer to precisely that question. "Prove It All Night" and "The Ties That Bind" followed. On these, the E Street Band played flawlessly, as they had for months. But Springsteen's vocals continued to soar above the music. By the time they finished "Darkness on the Edge of Town," they could have taken their bows and been gone. Never, it seemed, had they come out of the gate like this.

The music was extraordinary, but when Springsteen spoke his words did not appear out of place for that part of the tour. Introducing "Bye Bye Johnny" (which debuted several



NEAL PRESTON PHOTO

POSTER FROM THE COLLECTION OF PETE HOWARD/ICE MAGAZINE

NEAL PRESTON PHOTO

NEAL PRESTON PHOTO

BOB MULLER AND BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN BACKSTAGE, 8/20/81

months before in England) he recalled seeing Elvis Presley on the Ed Sullivan show: then nine years old, Bruce turned to his mother: "I looked at her and said, 'I want to be *just like that.*'" He then recounted how years later, a friend called to tell him that Presley had died. "I thought a lot about it," he said, "how somebody who had so much could in the end lose so bad." He set up another recent addition, a cover of Jimmy Cliff's "Trapped," by recommending a book, Nevins' and Commager's *A Pocket History of the United States*. "I didn't remember nothing about it from school, really," he said. "I read it, and I learned a little bit about how you end up a victim and you don't even know it." Effortlessly, this concert hinged on innocence lost.

Springsteen played six songs new to the West Coast audience that night (plus a string of three soul covers in the "Detroit Medley"). Before a brooding, slow version of Woody Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land," Springsteen said a fan in France had asked him how he could sing a song when he "knew that it wasn't true."

"The title of this song is 'This Land is Your Land,'" he said. "That's like a challenge, I guess—a dream that no matter how much it gets stepped on or run over," doesn't really die. It was the sole number he dedicated to the veterans.

Springsteen had mentioned Kovic's book from the stage in 1978; within three years, he was performing a sold-out benefit. That August evening would not be the last time that Bruce Springsteen engaged the Vietnam veteran. Soon, he would compose "Vietnam," which morphed into a more refined song: "Born in the U.S.A." One can imagine that Springsteen's involvement with VVAF and his appreciation for Woody Guthrie helped conjure a lot of what went into *Nebraska*, a collection of acoustic music recorded within months of this concert.

But even after *Born in the U.S.A.* propelled him to superstardom, Springsteen wasn't finished with his exploration of the Vietnam experience. More songs appeared in the years to come, from "Brothers Under the Bridge" to "Galveston Bay," the latter written from the twin perspectives of an American veteran and a Vietnamese immigrant.

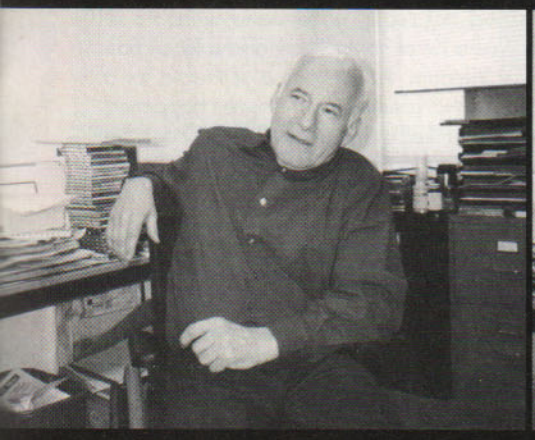
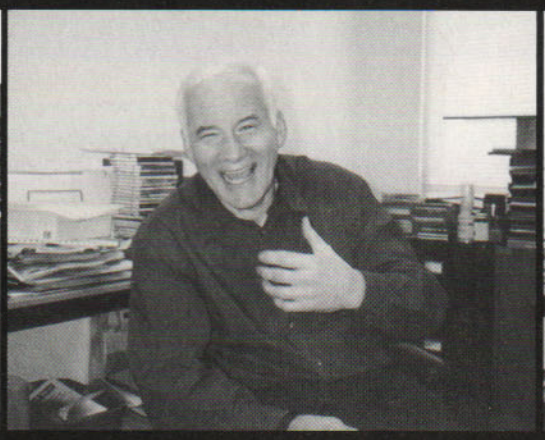
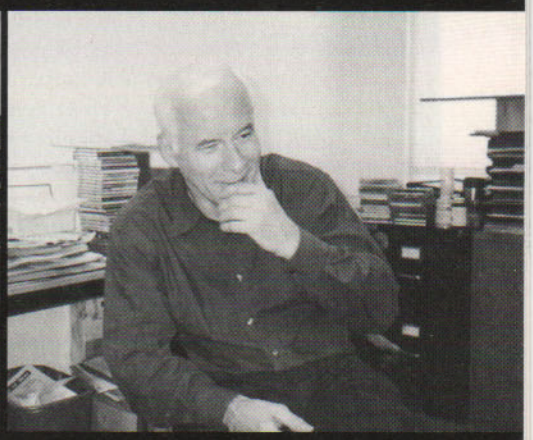
Perhaps this concert does not stand out in either Bruce's mind or for the E Street Band. After all, there were many nights they played well. Often, Bruce seemed to push himself harder. And of course, he went on to distinguish himself in the mid-'80s with his generosity and conscience. Max Weinberg has remarked that the concert was memorable, that they did play great, and that it was moving to have the veterans so close to them. But years later, another member of the band drew a blank when asked about this show. In a way, that business-as-usual mentality speaks highly of Bruce's music and the way he conducted himself. Sure, it was an amazing show, and yes, people who needed a helping hand got one. There were special guests, and comments before the show. That made it unique, but it also made it a night on which to build.

Music was no longer solely a way of communicating his vision, his intellect, and his heart. Rather, it became useful for something far greater: enabling action, and enlightening people. As the '80s wore on, fame seemed secondary to his commitment to move people, to get them off their seats. Many groups, from the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation and Amnesty International to dozens of local charities, gained as a result. The show in Los Angeles wasn't just a benefit. It was a history lesson, an act of decency, and a demonstration of credibility. Most of all, it was a coming out party, and Bruce Springsteen was there to play.

—Jonathan Pont

JONATHAN PONT PHOTOS

THE LONELY COOL BEFORE DAWN

THE BACKSTREETS INTERVIEW WITH BOB MULLER

Backstreets associate editor **JONATHAN PONT** met with Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation President Bob Muller in July, 2001, at the VVAF offices in Washington, D.C. Over the course of a two-hour interview, Muller talked about Springsteen, issues that shaped the Veteran movement, and where the organization is today. He presides over an organization now dedicated to banning landmines and aiding its survivors (the issue of veteran benefits continues to be the mission of Vietnam Veterans of America, based in Silver Spring, Maryland). For their efforts, the Campaign to Ban Landmines was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997; a reminder of which sits in the foundation's conference room. Muller, who served in Vietnam as a lieutenant in the Marine Corps, was wounded in combat in 1969. His injuries left him unable to walk. He is a graduate of Hofstra University and received an honorary Ph.D. in law from the school in June, 1998. The interview began with a playback of Springsteen's and Muller's comments before the music began that night 20 years ago.

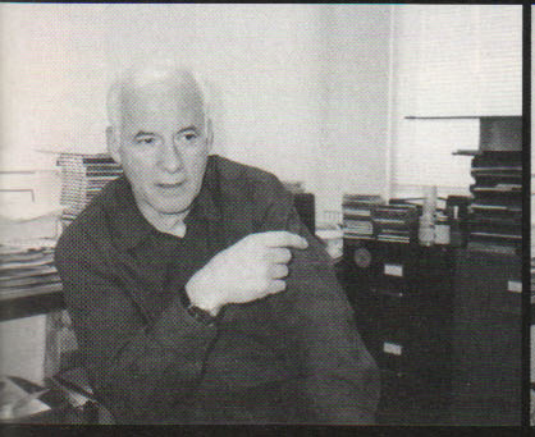
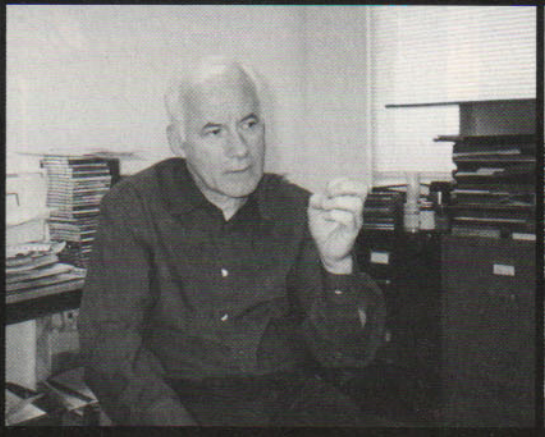
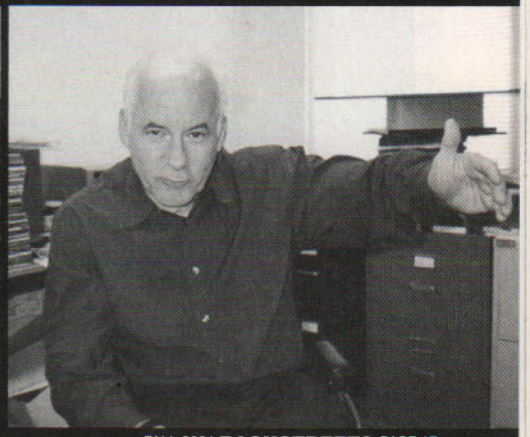
Backstreets: What did the concert in Los Angeles mean for its beneficiary, the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation?

Bob Muller: That was the turnaround event, really, in our history of putting together a coherent Vietnam veterans' movement. The organization that I was president of, the Vietnam Veterans of America, went on to become the only congressionally chartered organization in this country specifically for Vietnam veterans. It led the fight for the whole range of benefits that ultimately got enacted. So it was the critical organization and voice for Vietnam vets at a very appropriate and necessary time.

I'd started the organization in the very beginning of 1978 and struggled to keep it going. And literally, right at the time that we got connected with Bruce Springsteen, it was several years down the road and I just said, "you know, that's it." We'd hit the rocks five times where we thought the organization was going to fold. We got to the point where I said, "we cannot rally one more time and pull this thing out," even after those remarkable survivals.

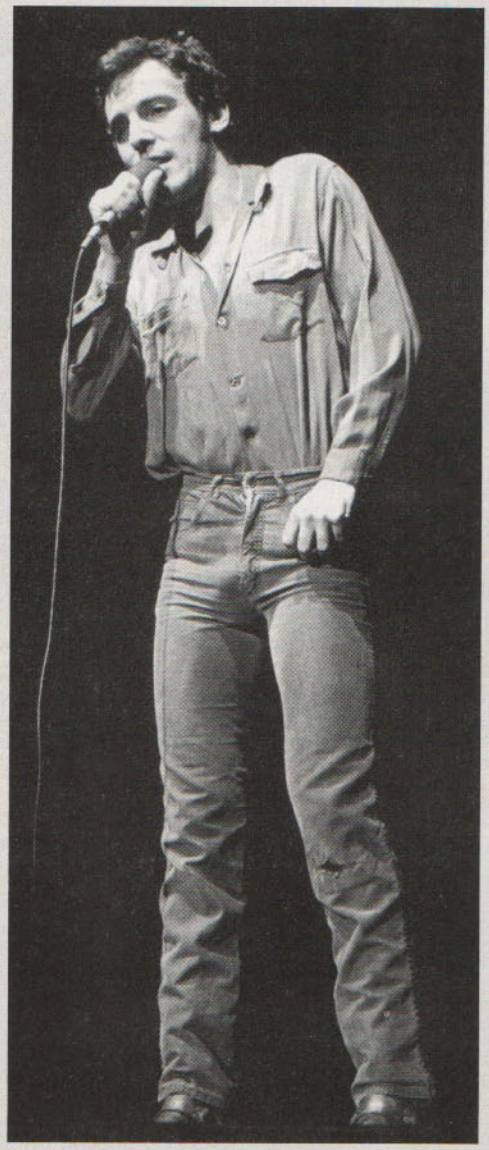
What was it? Money?

It was the inability to engage the issue of the Vietnam veteran. We had no money, we had no support. We were hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt. How we got that far in debt without manageable assets to trade off is another story. But we were going down. It was

AUGUST 20, 1981
THE SPEECHES

SPRINGSTEEN: Tonight we're here for the men and the women that fought the Vietnam War. Yesterday I was lucky enough to have met some of these guys, and it was funny, because I am used to coming out in front of a lot of people, and I realized that I was nervous and I was a little embarrassed about not knowing what to say to them. And it's like when you feel like you're walking down a dark street at night, and out of the corner of your eye you see somebody getting hurt, somebody getting hit in a dark alley, but you keep walking on because you think it don't have nothing to do with you—you just want to get home. Well, Vietnam turned this whole country into that dark street. And unless we're able to walk down those dark alleys and look into the eyes of those men and women that are down there and the things that happened, we're never gonna be able to get home. And then it's only a chance. You guys out there who are 18 or 19 years old: it happened once, and it can happen again. So, I guess all I am saying is, you gotta go down there and you gotta look. And we got the easy part. Because there's a lot of guys here tonight that had to live it, live it every day. And there's a lot of guys that made it home to America but died and didn't make it down here tonight. So what I want to ask you to do, I want to ask you to give a few minutes of your attention and listen to a friend of mine, a Vietnam veteran named Bob Muller.

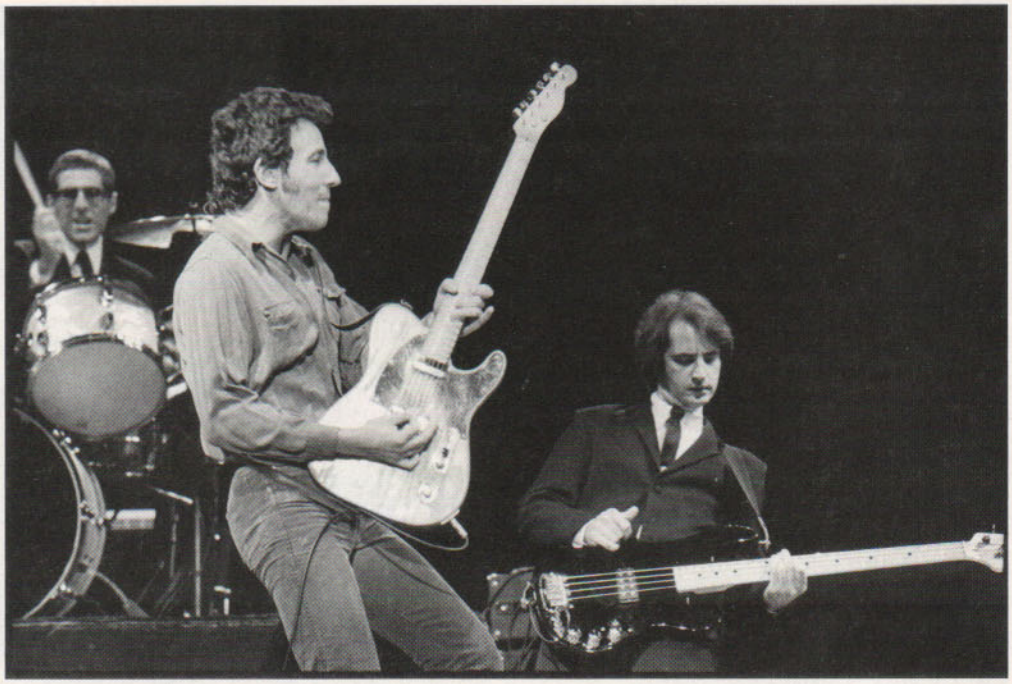


MULLER: Thank you. It's very exciting to be here tonight. It's a great night for Vietnam veterans. You may have been hearing about Vietnam veterans and not really understand what it's all about. Very simply, there was a lot of controversy and a lot of pain surrounding the tragedy of Vietnam. And because of that, a lot of people are trying to forget it and pretend that it never happened. That doesn't do much for the families of the 55,000 Americans that were killed in Vietnam. It doesn't do much for the 300,000 that were wounded fighting that war. But tonight is the first step in ending the silence that has surrounded Vietnam. It is the beginning of thanking all the people that have worked so hard for these years all over the country. People like in L.A.: the Shad Meshads, the team leaders from the vet centers, the Center for Veterans Rights, all the Vietnam veterans, and it's bringing us together. And by that it'll make sure that the programs are enacted, it'll make sure that the lessons are learned and that the Vietnams aren't allowed to happen again. The last thing I'm gonna say: it's a little bit ironic after the years that we've been trying, when the businesses haven't come behind us and the political leaders have failed to rally behind us, that when you remember the divisions within our own generation about the war, that it ultimately turns out to be the very symbol of our generation—rock 'n' roll—that brings us together. And it is rock 'n' roll that is going to provide the healing process that everybody needs. So let's not talk about it, let's get down to it, let's rock 'n' roll!

NEAL PRESTON PHOTOS

our darkest moment, and I say that very honestly.

When I came to Washington D.C. in 1978, I had the benefit of hooking up with the editor of the *Washington Post* editorial page, a guy by the name of Phil Geyelin. He was sympathetic to what we were doing. He introduced me to a columnist who introduced me to people around town. So the second week I'm here, I get a big story in the *Washington Post*, with a photo. The title was "Vietnam Veteran Advocate Arrives." You couldn't have asked for better. Off of that piece I got a call from then-freshman member of Congress, David Bonior, from Michigan. He said, "Let's get together. I'm a Vietnam-era veteran, let's see what we can do." We put a caucus together. The key members of the caucus besides Bonior were Al Gore, Leon Panetta, Tom Daschle—guys who became political leaders in America. But back then they were freshmen. So while they had good hearts and good intentions, politically they couldn't get anything done. We got shut down in the veterans' committees in the House and the Senate by the old-line guys, chairmen of the committees who were from the deep South. Their alliance and allegiance was with the older veterans.



NEAL PRESTON PHOTO

It was a generational thing?

Right. A Lou Harris poll showed that the older veterans regarded us, the Vietnam veterans, in the context of what was considered the counterculture generation: that we were the long-haired, pot smoking hippies who threw our medals back on the steps of the Capitol, and basically just weren't there the way they'd been there. They never respected Vietnam as a war compared to what they had fought. We were a bunch of crybabies.

The other issue, economically, is that we were very competitive, actually threatening. The majority of veterans' benefits have nothing to do with a veteran's service. It's basically a welfare agency that is renamed veterans' benefits because they give an awful lot of veterans pensions, which are separate from compensation. Our needs were directly related to service. Their needs were not the priority, but were big, established programs.

So Geyelin at the *Post* gave us something like 35 editorials on the op/ed page over the next year. We had a dinner about a year later. He told me that the *Post* had never gone to bat editorially on an issue as they had about Vietnam vets. And the experience had been remarkable because there was no response. Normally, if there is an editorial criticizing Health, Education and Welfare or the Department of Defense, or whatever, the agency calls. The White House calls. They want a rebuttal piece. This did nothing for Vietnam veterans' issues. Not only had government not responded the way they normally would, but the public hadn't responded. Geyelin said, "I'm convinced that we have to raise the level of discussion, get beyond Vietnam veterans, to a larger examination of the experience of Vietnam and what it meant for America."

He hooked up a lunch with Winston Lord, who was then the president of the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. Lord hooked up with McGeorge Bundy, who was then president of the Ford Foundation. These two guys put together a lunch, and they had the real power establishment there. It was a lot of big business people, blue-chip companies, editorial board members from newspapers, network people, investment people from Wall Street. It was a power meeting. It went on for about two-and-a-half hours at the Ford Foundation, and we went on about the needs of Vietnam vets, where things stood.

At the end, McGeorge Bundy said, "What you're doing, Bobby, is laudable and deserving, but I'm afraid you're simply not going to get support, other than maybe from the Ford Foundation. What you need to understand is that Vietnam makes powerful people in this country uncomfortable. They feel embarrassed and ashamed. It's just a very negative feeling."

This is coming from someone who was an architect of American foreign policy in the 1960s.

Yes. Bundy went on to say that "you guys, as veterans, are the legacy. Not just the legacy, but also the symbol of Vietnam. Because of that, powerful people just aren't going to get behind you." He said that not to be a son of a bitch—and in fact he did help us out through the Ford Foundation—he was giving us the reality of what Vietnam meant in America in the late 1970s and early '80s. It was a *big* negative.

Struggling as we did for several years, in that environment, was when we were finally about to give up the ghost. And that's when Bruce came in. It literally turned us around.

How did you and Bruce initially connect?

I was in our New York office, and the guy with me was a Vietnam veteran, a guy named Igor. He answered the phone and said, "Hey, Bob, there's someone on the phone who wants to talk to you about Bruce Springsteen or something." Igor had been brought up in a Russian-speaking household, so I said, "Igor, I love you, but you're culturally deficient. Now give me the phone!" It was Jon Landau.

Jon said that Bruce had been following the Vietnam vets for quite a while, that the drummer in Bruce's first band had been killed in Vietnam, and that he's been asking around. One of the guys he had been speaking to was Joe Klein, who went on to write *Primary Colors*. He had written a book on Woody Guthrie *[Woody Guthrie: A Life]*, and [was working on] another one on Vietnam veterans *[Payback: Five Marines After Vietnam]*. I'd worked with him on that effort. So he came to know who we were and what we were doing. I think it was Joe Klein who said [to Bruce], "Well, this is the guy you have to talk to."

Landau asked if I had a willingness to meet with Bruce. I said, "Sure!" Bruce was playing a night or two later at Brendan Byrne Arena. I had never really been to a rock 'n' roll concert. I'd never seen Springsteen. I knew of him, but I wasn't a fan. I get there, and the concert was going on. Landau asked, "Do you want to catch some of the concert?" I said, "Frankly, I'd rather talk." So Landau and I go off and we talk for an hour. At the end, he says, "Well, it's going to be a while yet. Do you want to go watch the concert?" I said okay.

And that's when my life changed, because I got introduced into the concert arena, right next to the stage. At the back, on the side. The

NEAL PRESTON PHOTO

concert had been going on for a while. By this time, Bruce had been doing what Bruce does. It was an unbelievable experience for me to go into an arena that size and have all that energy, and everybody *rockin'*, and have it all focused on this one guy who was so close to me. It was an awesome moment. I had never experienced that kind of energy. It was great. I watched the concert, and afterward he met some people in his dressing room. I was the last one they brought in. We sat down and talked for about a half an hour, maybe 45 minutes. He wanted to know what we were trying to do as an organization, what our situation was.

What did you tell him?

I just told him where we were. We were trying to get legislation enacted for a revamped G.I. Bill that would effectively provide the opportunity to go to college. What people didn't realize was that what Vietnam vets had as a G.I. Bill was completely different than what the second World War guys got. And it was woefully inadequate in all respects.

What did you want in a new G.I. Bill?

It was about getting an education provision, an effective employment provision, counseling centers, vets' centers, recognizing Agent Orange as an issue. Just the range of concerns, including general recognition of the experience of the Vietnam veteran.

He said, "Let me think about it." I think it was the next day that Jon Landau called back. He said, "Bruce would like to help. He'd like to do a concert for you in Los Angeles. Can you come out to L.A. next month?" I said "Sure!" That was it.

We went out to L.A. The day before the concert, we hooked up with Bruce. As I recall, we went to a counseling center for vets. It was either there or right after that we showed him a documentary that a friend of mine, David Monroe, had made on Vietnam veterans. It's a very powerful film. We spent the afternoon doing that.

The next morning, Bruce called and said "I want to say something tonight, and I want to introduce you. I want you to say something, too, at the concert." He told me two things: "If you think they're booing you, they're not. They're saying *'Bruuuuce.'* And Bobby, it's a rock 'n' roll audience—keep it short!"

I went [to the Sports Arena] that night and they had really done a spectacular job. On the sides of the stage they had built platforms and there were a lot of vets, literally, on the side of the stage. These were guys in wheelchairs. Guys who would never have gotten a particular vantage point at a concert were put right next to the stage.

Did Bruce ask his crew to do that or did you make that request?

No, I didn't do anything. They were sensitive to doing the right thing. It was great. We had the best view you could ever want to have of the event. To have these guys elevated… when are you ever going to go to a concert and have a seat like this? It was a special night for us. You remember how dark those days tended to be. That magnified the effect. We celebrated.

He gave us $100,000 that night. But more than the money was having Bruce Springsteen bring us out. That night I said it was about ending the silence that had surrounded Vietnam, and the fact that we could be talked about, an issue out there in the public mind. Within 30 days from Bruce doing that concert, we got a big concert from Pat Benatar, who was hot at the time. Charlie Daniels gave us a concert. So we got money to resuscitate us, but more importantly, you know, we got made cool. The press around what Bruce did was a tremendous boost for us. We got events to fall into place fairly quickly. We never looked back.

How soon after 1981 did things begin to shift? When did that stability begin to translate into real results, tangible benefits, for Vietnam veterans?

When I say we didn't look back from L.A., we didn't look back. It

gave us life; it gave us a new opportunity. With that new life, resuscitation, we just were able to pick up on what was a rapidly changing environment. Later we had the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial. The dedication was a galvanizing event.

The irony, of course, in 2001, is that the debate is over the World War II memorial.

Frankly, when people appreciated the power of the Vietnam Memorial to address so much of the emotion around that experience, the Korean war guys got a memorial, the World War II guys want one... I don't think anyone expected that the Vietnam Memorial would have a place that it has had in the healing process.

When it was dedicated, it was the first time that thousands of Vietnam veterans had come together, other than the protests of Vietnam Veterans Against the War. It was very interesting, because vets showed up in their old camouflage utilities. It was obvious that guys walking around were vets. And immediately, a brotherhood was established at the dedication that made it all right to stand together and say, "Hey, I'm a Vietnam veteran." It was such a cathartic and turnaround experience for vets to come together and identify themselves as vets. We started getting a membership. A lot of these guys took back to their communities a willingness to stand up.

That was not the case before?

No. Again, Lou Harris did a poll. It found that the overwhelming majority of Vietnam veterans never talked about their experience when they got home. And this was years later, the 1980s—maybe '84. We were the exception. We came back, we got involved in the movement, Vietnam Vets Against the War, we had our rap groups, we talked about this shit all the time, and we worked through being a Vietnam vet. The whole experience.

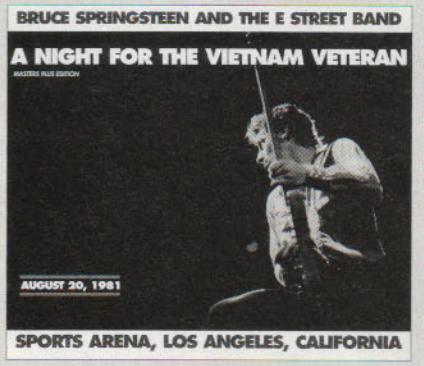
When I came to Washington years later, I thought that organizing Vietnam vets would be like organizing more Vietnam Vets Against the War. No! That wasn't it! Because the majority of the guys weren't us. The majority of the guys came back to communities where it wasn't okay to speak out against the war. They shut up. And even though they said in the survey that going to fight in Vietnam was the most significant experience of their lives, they never talked about it. So as we had a national rehabilitation of the veteran's experience, these guys started to come out and talk about it.

Veterans didn't even want to be identified as Vietnam vets for a long time. If you couldn't get guys to rally and stand together on the basis of common needs and experience, you don't have a whole lot of strength to address those shared concerns.

But I'll tell you: we could not have held on and gotten the strength to ride that had it not been for Bruce. He was on the front end of it. When I tell you that he came in at the critical time for us to be coherent, that's the gospel. Had VVA not made it, there would have been a rehabilitation in the public's mind of the Vietnam veteran, but I don't think it would have been as purposeful in outcome. Changing the general attitude is one thing. Having that changed attitude yield programs is another. That's what we did. We took what was naturally going to happen in a society ultimately coming to terms with an experience as profound as the Vietnam was, but not let it be just a feel-good exercise.

Every night, by virtue of what Bruce did, he looked out into the faces of a younger generation. Like what he said on the recording, "it happened once, it can happen again." Education seemed very important. Was there an educational component to VVA?

Absolutely. Several months after that I had the privilege of leading the first group of American veterans back to Vietnam


BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN AND THE E STREET BAND
A NIGHT FOR THE VIETNAM VETERAN
MASTERS PLUS EDITION
AUGUST 20, 1981
SPORTS ARENA, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

A NIGHT FOR THE VIETNAM VETERAN: MASTERS PLUS EDITION (SCOPRIO, 3CD)

SOUND: 8.5
PACKAGING: 10
PERFORMANCE: 10

Has there ever been a perfect bootleg? Even the great ones generally have a typo here, a flopped photo there, or offer something below pristine sound. And without question there are sonic flaws in Scorpio's new *A Night for the Vietnam Veteran: Masters Plus Edition* that couldn't be avoided given inherent problems in the master tapes. But make no mistake, the new Vets is a five-star title on any scale, and it gives this magnificent show its proper due.

Longtime collectors may remember that the Vets show did have prior release on bootleg from short-lived label Winged Wheel, which was run by a consortium of Italian fans. Their heart was clearly in the right place when they issued the Vets in a limited-edition box set, but they were only able to tap an average source. *In You Better Not Touch 3,* I said of the Winged Wheel set: "circulating tapes of this show were never outstanding, with most traders grading it in the 'very good' range, and this boot is no exception.... Until a tremendous tape shows up, this average-quality CD will have to do."

But would it? For years, word in the collecting community held that the show had been recorded using a relatively obscure Uher tape deck. In the mid-'90s, again as the legend goes, a collector tracked down the taper and/or the master tapes and made new dubs direct to DAT. But the new transfers, either due to tape deterioration or perhaps because playback was not done on the original Uher deck, were disappointing.

As liner notes in the new Scorpio set explain, over the last few years another collector again attempted to track the Vets recordings back to the master tapes. But this time they discovered something that had eluded the rest of us all these years—there are two different recordings of the show: one complete with a few minor flaws but only of average quality, and another 95 percent complete and of outstanding quality. The latter is every bit the equal of the finest audience recordings of the *River* tour, and I'd argue superior to the fabled "Stockholm tapes" that first appeared on the legendary vinyl boots *Follow That Dream* and *Teardrops on the City.*

A new, complete version of the Vets show was then compiled by augmenting the high-quality recording with the missing pieces from the average tape. It is this composite recording that was then remastered and appears on the Scorpio release. A recent online "CD-R tree" also made the new high-quality source available, but used the partial soundboard recording of the show (which surfaced several years ago and is flawed in its own right) to upgrade the speeches at the beginning of the show.

The CD-R tree release, *Written on the Wall,* sports its own appropriate packaging and fine liner notes. But my hat goes off to Scorpio's presentation, which not only takes its cover from the special poster printed for and sold at the show itself but includes a sharp mini-reprint of that poster, with Steve Pond's original *Rolling Stone* concert review, along with the text of both Springsteen's and Bobby Muller's speeches on the other side. Throw in a second booklet of liners, sharp design that even incorporates a ticket from the show, and real gold CDs, and you have a fully realized document of a truly inspired night.

And for the first time in 20 years, the Vets sounds as good as the night it was recorded, as good as it possibly could given the known sources.

—Lynn Elder

NEAL PRESTON PHOTO

since the war. It was a big trip. Front page of the *New York Times*, the *Today* show, *Good Morning America*. Off of that trip, we began a program of reconciliation with Vietnam and started some programs on a minimum scale. Having American servicemen going back and connecting with Vietnamese guys and vets and government really added a voice to the whole experience. We started doing lectures on campuses at 100 universities around the country. Getting our voice in the public arena, educating America to what nobody wanted to talk about, nobody wanted to hear about, which was, "Hey, what happened here? You know, 55,000 guys died, this nation got ripped apart. Let's talk about it."

The whole Vietnam thing has not been settled in America's psyche. There's still a tremendous reservoir around that, which is below the surface. It's not up front, part of everyday life. But if something happens that connects to that underlying emotion, you rapidly see the power that's there.

Look at what happened a couple months ago with Bob Kerrey. You had a distinguished United States Senator, a Medal of Honor recipient. A real honest-to-goodness war hero. Lost his leg in Vietnam. Turns out that there was an earlier incident where things went sour on a mission. The strength with which the public engaged that disclosure was awesome. For a lot of us here it got a lot of emotions going. It's still a very powerful thing.

For my generation, the line was that the Persian Gulf War buried Vietnam. Like what we did ten years ago helped us "get over it."

No. That's absolutely not true.

Obviously for you.

I think obviously for America. Look at how we handled ourselves in Kosovo. Our strategy was to avoid body bags. The feeling that Americans wouldn't tolerate casualties was the prime directive. The hesitation to commit U.S. forces on principle to a mission is pretty clearly reflective of what a lot of people came out of Vietnam with, which is a very clear aversion to getting involved with conflict.

The Persian Gulf War was pretty remarkable in that there was a real deep division within America. If you recall, Bush rallied the military, shipped them over, and put us in a combat eminent situation. The stage was set. Only at that point did Bush submit to the Senate for debate and a vote to support what we were doing. And it was, what, by three votes?

Al Gore had a decisive vote on that.

The speeches were powerful, and they were given by guys who were really conflicted. When you remember what had been done to set the stage for that fight, after all of that, we just narrowly got a vote in the Senate saying okay. That's pretty fucking remarkable, because basically you're saying, "We're going in, the troops are at the ready. Now, are you going to support them or not?" It was unbelievable how in a very short period of time America got transformed from a very divided country into, "Okay, let's get it done."

Characterize for me the kind of reception you got from various presidents. Specifically, how did having Bill Clinton, a president who is of your generation, the Vietnam War generation, make a difference, if any?

As president of VVA, I went to the White House the eight years Reagan was in for Veterans' Day, Memorial Day, all these ceremonial things. The propagandizing that he came out with to justify America having gone to fight in Vietnam was remarkable.

Unfortunately, Reagan was able to inject the poison of this bogus prisoner-of-war issue into society. Those of us who were much deeper in the issue and could get beyond the headline knew it was a bullshit issue.

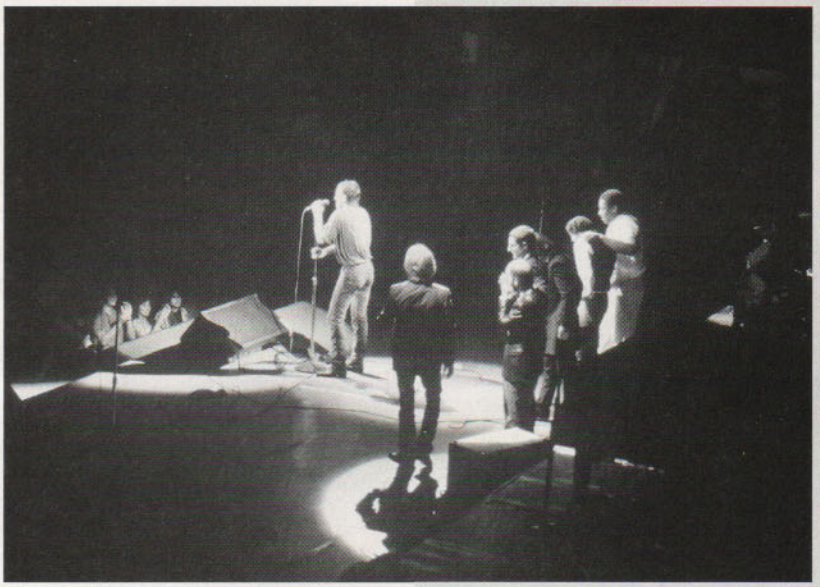
His whole rhetoric was exploitative, in terms of rehabilitating the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. The POW issue was a hot button to

punch emotionally. It made the Vietnamese look like the bad guys: you know, holding our guys in bamboo cages, raising the issue of honor and all that. That became the dividing issue within the movement: guys who were seduced by the propaganda of the Reagan administration on this issue, and a lot who said, "That's not true." As the ideological divide grew within the Vietnam veterans' movement, the progressive elements, as I refer to them, were losing ground to the greater numbers of people who were coming in.

So in the mid-'80s I changed the mission: VVA remained a membership organization for veterans' benefits, and the foundation, VVAF, kept the larger interests of war and war-related concerns.

That led to trying to ban the land mine. How did that begin?

In 1991, we set up our first clinic in Cambodia to help land mine victims. That work made it very clear to me that more needed to done than simply setting up rehabilitation centers: you needed to get rid of the weapon. So we started an effort to ban land mines as a weapon of war. Just like after World War I, when the world community held poison gas out of play. Let's do the same thing for land mines.



Well, the key guy that I worked on was Bill Clinton. And Bill Clinton didn't deliver on land mines. Learning the lesson of the earlier years with the Vietnam vets, when we had nice guys but with no political strength, we went right to the committee chairman, Patrick Leahy of Vermont, who became our advocate on land mines and really did a lot.

But when the moment of truth came, Clinton would not stand up to the military and tell them, "Sorry guys, but we've got a lot of considerations here, and we're going to take away the land mine." It's pretty clear to me that because Bill Clinton did not serve, and because he avoided serving the way he did, he felt diminished and not of the strength and stature that he felt he needed to be able to tell the military what to do. So Clinton in that respect, frankly, was a real disappointment... [even] FDR, in the middle of a war where we were taking very heavy casualties, overrode all prior authorizations to use poison gas. He said no. That kind of leadership, under those dire circumstances, to adhere to the principle that certain categories of weapons ought not to be introduced, was far from Bill Clinton's political construct.

Is the window closed on land mines? My intuition tells me that George W. Bush might be even less sympathetic.

Actually we have a better opportunity with George W. Bush than we did with Bill Clinton.

continued page 25

I remember well the anticipation of that "opening night" in Los Angeles—opening, that is, of Bruce's return after being away from L.A. for nearly a year on the *River* tour. I had seen three of the four shows he played at the Sports Arena during the first month of *The River*'s release, and now he was back—but was he burnt out? Is there any way he could possibly come close to, much less match, those shows from the previous year?

Twenty years ago, I had a lot more time on my hands (didn't we all?). So every time I'd get home from a concert, any concert, I filled out an index card with my review of the show. Now, a generation later, with over 50 Bruce concerts under my belt (and hundreds by other artists), I'm glad that I did.

My index card from the Vietnam Veterans benefit carries an observation that certainly appears naive today: "Sat four rows behind, and to the side of, the stage—Bruce was great—he hasn't lost anything in the 10 months since we saw him last."

I was also lucky enough to have picked that particular night to sneak in my heavy metal Nikon camera. I remember the routine well: half the camera, the lens, was benevolently smuggled in by my friend Chuck Ross in the crotch of his pants, just out of reach of the security guards' prying pat-downs. At least the lens was smooth and cylindrical in shape—call it "smuggle-friendly." The actual body of the camera—rectangular, bulky and sharp-cornered—was reserved for me, the surreptitious photographer. I refused to sacrifice my fashion sense at a Springsteen concert for the sake of this crime, so wearing the usual tight Levi's, it was awkward and painful to walk. But the exhilaration of getting through the guards was almost as joyful as a "Backstreets" encore.

The rest of the show speaks for itself. The opening speech about Vietnam Veterans, the concert kicking off with a Creedence Clearwater cover, the "new" songs (including "Trapped"), a Byrds cover in the encore, Bruce's intense performance, even the souvenir commemorative poster—it was a night to remember.

—Pete Howard
Publisher, *ICE* magazine

PETE HOWARD PHOTOS

NEAL PRESTON PHOTO

PATTY GRIFFIN'S MAD, MAD MISSION

AN ARTIST WORKING WITH VVAF TODAY

Armed with a powerful voice and insightful songwriting to match, Patty Griffin made her major label debut with 1996's *Living With Ghosts*. Her sophomore effort, *Flaming Red*, arrived in 1998, and a year later, Patty was introduced to Bob Muller. Fast forward two more years and there's Patty dedicating her song "Mary" to Bobby—on the night of his 54th birthday—and other members of the VVAF staff in the Alexandria, Virginia audience. She has been active with VVAF for almost a year now, and last spring was able to travel with them to Vietnam and Cambodia.

"Mary" is a song of quiet resolve and resolution, and it's easy to understand the dedication. *While the angels are singin' his praises in a blaze of glory, Mary stays behind and starts cleaning up the place.* It's what Muller and VVAF have been doing for over 20 years, and Griffin is one of many artists—including Steve Earle, Bruce Cockburn, and Gillian Welch—who have helped. *Backstreets'* **ANDREW MASSIMINO** caught up with her by phone in Austin, Texas.

That night at the Birchmere Theatre in Virginia you played "Stolen Car." Why did you decide to start playing it in concert, and what made you decide to record it for your new record?

I knew "Stolen Car" just from being a fan, growing up listening to Bruce. It's one of those songs that carries me through. He has a way—like all of my favorite writers—of saying the most with a minimum of words, and just letting the emotions ride on a picture, an image. He leaves room for your own heart to feel it. It's just a beautiful piece of art.

And "Mary" was a great birthday present for Bob Muller. How did you get involved with VVAF?

Emmylou Harris asked me to do a number of songwriter roundtable shows on the West Coast at the end of 1999, and that was where I met a lot of the folks at VVAF. It was the beginning of my awareness of these issues. When I met Bobby, one of the first things I said to him was "Why can't someone like you run for president?" He's a very charismatic person, and I admire him a great deal. He asked if I would be interested in going to Vietnam and Cambodia. I said, "Of course." It took me a while to actually find an opening—I was on the road quite a bit at that time. But this past spring the opportunity came up. They didn't forget about me, which was nice. When you have an opportunity to go to a place like that—especially from this country where we are so directly linked to their fate—you go.

What was it like for an American singer-songwriter in Southeast Asia?

The first few days we spent in Hanoi learning about the orthotics program that they have going on there, and meeting the people working there—Vietnamese, Canadian, Belgian, a few Westerners. They were starting an outpost program that they wanted the VVAF to learn about. Then we moved on to Cambodia. Most of the trip was spent in Phnom Penh, and that was very emotional. The people there are in such need of aid. There are more landmines still in the ground than there are people. That really makes it the war that never ends. One of the first things you notice is the high number of amputees, both young and old. In a place with little infrastructure, with the farmland completely wrecked by war and the landmines so prevalent, it's really hard on people's psyches. Even though the fighting has stopped, they live in constant fear of being killed. It's very difficult to move beyond that fear, which as we now know in this country can be paralyzing. It's a sad situation, but some really strong, amazing people have grown out of that situation. Our country should recognize our role in those landmines being there and accept some of the responsibility in removing them.

What are your hopes for the VVAF and their message?

I have a lot of hope that their experience with war, what it means to be wounded, to see people that you know have their bodies destroyed, gives them a wisdom that most of us living in this country don't have. And that sort of wisdom can help people understand why peace is so important, and why helping other people in the world community is so important. I felt so lucky to be able to learn so much just from hanging out with them. There was one man in particular who was very open with me about his experience in Vietnam, about what happened to him. He lost both of his legs, a double amputee, and I was really amazed and humbled by what he was able to tell me. There was a certain grace that he had, that Bobby has, that really can be transmitted to the rest of us through the work that they do. I hope they get the attention they deserve, especially now. There needs to be better awareness, now more than ever, so we don't end up putting more landmines in the ground elsewhere.

SAM JONES PHOTO

How so?

Because look what's going on with Cheney and Rumsfeld. These guys are willing to stand up and assert civilian control of the military that you didn't see under Clinton.

By 1975, you had been back from Vietnam for about six years. You were passing time, maybe, uncertain about what you ought to do. At what point did you begin to consider the possibility of fighting the system?

When I came back, I was in a military hospital, St. Alban's, in Queens, for five or six weeks. I had just gotten into a wheelchair, and after a couple months I could finally move on my own, get some of my own things. Great! Then I went to a veterans' hospital, Kingsbridge, in the Bronx. My first day there, they put me in a bed. After a couple hours, I wanted to get up. I said, "Get me a wheelchair." They said, "We don't have a wheelchair." You had three wards, 90 guys with spinal cord injuries. When I was on a hospital ship, off the coast of Vietnam, the doctors were already telling me "You're going to New York, they have great spinal cord injury center."

So I'm already building this thing up like it's going to be great. I get there, and it's an old 1800s orphanage converted to a hospital, the most depressing fucking thing in the world. Most of the guys there were these old farts, who had nothing to with the service, non-service connected guys who were down and out. Then they said they didn't have a wheelchair. I started screaming. The first day I cried was that first day in the veterans' hospital. I was like, "Fuck *me? Fuck you!*" I started to come back.

The next morning, they have grand rounds. All the doctors come around. I still remember the chief of physical medicine and rehabilitation, Dr. Ellis. They give him a three-by-five card as he comes to my bed. He said, "Ah, Lieutenant Muller. Son, I hope you realize you're hopelessly paralyzed." *Son, I hope you realize you're hopelessly paralyzed.* Now, I had spent time at the Naval Hospital, and they explained that because both lungs had collapsed that that's what made it such a critical injury, that they could never do anything with the spinal cord. They told me at great length that there are certain things that you can't determine. Only time will tell if you get return of function, feeling. So to see this asshole that gets introduced to me on the basis of a three-by-five card come out with that kind of summary declaration, which I knew from discussions with the surgeons was impossible to make, that just set the tone. It was literally, out of the starting blocks in the hospital, that it became a fight. The first day. That's when it happened.

Then I got caught up in the anti-war movement. I got thrown out of the Republican National Convention. I was a militant. But the country re-elected this fucking war criminal, Nixon, with the largest mandate at that point of anybody in history. And what do you do? '73, '74, you go to the racetrack and get fucking high, because fuck this country. Everybody's crazy. I am clearly out of sync with America. In '74, I actually left America, thinking I was not going to come back. Actually, it was the night Nixon resigned. I was on a plane to Switzerland.

But it was boring, so I came back. I got connected; I got married, and went to work for the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association for a couple years, being their in-house legislative and legal affairs guy. I

LISTEN UP
VETS SHOW HIGHLIGHTS

The Vets show stands as a true highlight of Bruce's career on performance alone. After the moving speeches from Springsteen and Muller, the show is extraordinary in terms of emotion and intensity. From profound and well-chosen covers, to near-breakdowns, to electrifying blow-outs, here are some of the moments that make 8/20/81 especially memorable.

1. WHO'LL STOP THE RAIN

The E Streeters had been playing this Creedence Clearwater Revival song for much of the tour, but its significance was clearest on this night. Songwriter John Fogerty rarely discusses his writing process, and that is especially true of his Creedence material. In 1997, however, he appeared on VH-1's *Storytellers* and had this to say about "Who'll Stop the Rain": "In 1969, in the middle of the Nixon administration, I was starting to become ashamed of our government. I felt that the government didn't actually represent me or people like me anymore." In another interview Fogerty said of the composition, "I was asking questions I had no answer to. Why are these people in charge, and yet they don't seem to be listening to us, the people they say they are representing?" CCR's "Who'll Stop the Rain" was actually the b-side of "Travelin' Band," but both sides of this single reached number two in the charts in early 1970. (Is there any other single that Bruce has covered *both* sides of?) Both songs would be included on CCR's fifth album, *Cosmo's Factory,* released that July. CCR was enormously popular with soldiers and was heavily played on Armed Forces Radio. "Fortunate Son" and "Who'll Stop the Rain" in particular became anthems for the servicemen in Vietnam.

2. PROVE IT ALL NIGHT

Fans familiar with the longer version from the *Darkness* tour often praise Bruce's intricate guitar work. This version, the second song of the night, showcases Bruce's vocal performance. At the end of the second verse, Bruce's voice shoots to the upper part of its range, sounding almost as if he were crying the lines. It's thrilling, and even a little scary.

3. THE RIVER

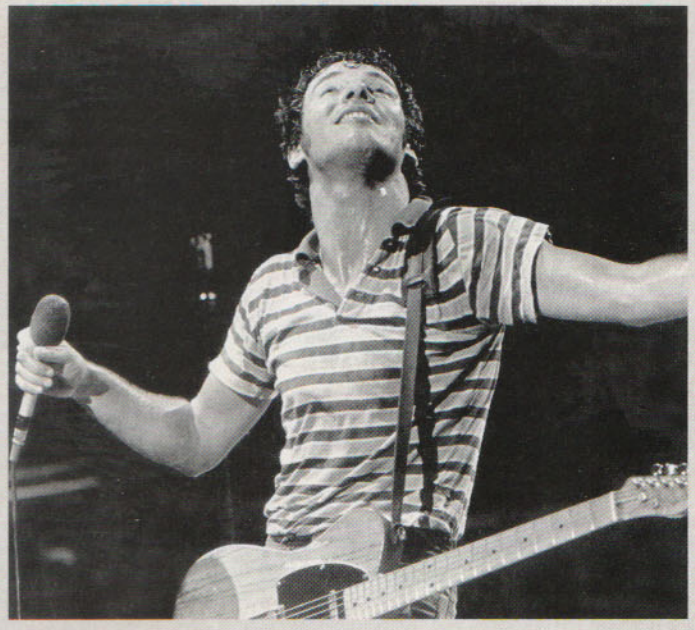
Bruce, seemingly overcome with emotion, stops singing in the middle of this song. The band continues playing as scattered people in the audience sing "we went down to the courthouse, and the judge put it all to rest." Bruce quickly composed himself and finished a tender rendition. He has occasionally forgotten lines, but this was something else.

4. "GUTHRIE'S VISION"

Near the end of the first set, Bruce talks about singing a song that on the surface could seem naive and idealistic. He speaks with maturity of how, to him, the Woody Guthrie song "This Land is Your Land" is a challenge, and a dream to aspire to, rather than a bold statement of pride.

5. CADILLAC RANCH

For all its seriousness, the show doesn't lack for fun. In the second set, Bruce adds a guitar break at the end of "Cadillac Ranch," extending this one in a great moment of playful spontaneity.



IRIS SCHNEIDER/LOS ANGELES TIMES PHOTO

6. BAND INTRODUCTIONS

When it comes time for the band introductions in "Rosalita," Bruce goes into overdrive. These are among the most memorable and goofy ever, including "poems" for Roy and Clarence. "Roy's so close to my heart," says Bruce, "I got a poem for Roy!"

R is for Roy, cause that's his name.
O is for piano cause that's his game.
And Y? Because he likes it!

The intros finish with "Spotlight on the Big Man," sung to the tune of "Sweet Soul Music."

7. BALLAD OF EASY RIDER

The encore marks the only time Bruce has ever performed this Byrds song, adding a poignant note to an otherwise over-the-top encore. Jon Landau told Robert Hilburn that Bruce "just worked it up during the intermission because he wanted a nice healing-type song to cap off the evening."

For years there has been some question regarding Bob Dylan's involvement in the writing of "Ballad of Easy Rider." Some go so far as to say that Dylan wrote it and wanted no credit. In fact, the actual composer, Roger McGuinn, cleared up this confusion in a 1971 interview: "When I wrote that track for the film *[Easy Rider]* he had something to do with it, and so his name came up on the original screen credits. He called me up very angrily and he said: 'Take that off. I told you not to give me any credit. I do things like that for people every day. I just gave you a line—that's all.' Which actually was true, we hadn't really got deeply involved together over that song." The generally accepted version of the facts is that Dylan contributed the first line and left the rest to McGuinn.

"Ballad of Easy Rider" was recorded in June 1969, at the height of America's involvement in the war in Vietnam. It was the title track of a Byrds album released later that year and was also released as a single. But by 1969, McGuinn was the only original member left in the band, and the Byrds' hit making days were over. The single didn't reach the top 40. The song surely came to evoke the Vietnam era in subsequent years due to its inclusion in the film, *Easy Rider.*

—Robert Bader and Magnus Lauglo

recognized how screwed up everything was for Vietnam vets. Getting them to understand the greater arena of veterans' benefits, how the older guys with these non-service related programs were sucking up all the bucks and how we had nothing that compared with what previous generations of veterans had gotten in a G.I. Bill. We were getting shut down left and right. I went to the paralyzed guys and said, "Hey, somebody has to speak to the Vietnam vets." They gave me an initial underwriting and said, "Go forth and do your own thing." And so it began.

I've been asked, and maybe it's because of veterans and war, who's my hero? I've always answered: Bruce. People either don't believe me, or think I'm kidding. They certainly don't understand. I explain that I live in a town where egos are so out of proportion that it's ridiculous. When you meet a guy like Bruce, who came from a humble and modest childhood, to go through the changes he went through to become the kind of cultural icon he is, and still keep his balance, that is remarkable. People lose it. Anytime you get introduced to fame. I went through it—a bit of a media rush when I got here. It can easily spin you out. You start to believe your own press; you get carried away with yourself. Bruce has kept his balance through all these stages of growth. To be a values-based guy like that is remarkable. In the '80s I asked him, "What's the key, man?" He said, "It's my music. I keep my music in the center. That is what defines me. So long as I stay focused on that, and stay true to that, I'm okay." That's been his anchor.

You were one of the first people to hear "Born in the U.S.A." when it was finished. When you first heard lyrics like "the first kick I took was when I hit the ground," what was your immediate reaction?

One of the things I've come to appreciate is that, like a poet, with relatively few words, he gets right in and conveys what needs to be understood. The words he said that night in Los Angeles, which you just reminded me of today, it's like, "Something's going on, no one wants to pay attention, but you have to pay attention, you have to walk down that dark alley." That's exactly what was going on in America. It was the fact that some shit was going on but "I don't need to get involved." He was saying, "You have to." With all the things he could have said, he captured it. What he says in "Born in the U.S.A."—"Son, don't you understand now?" Well, *yeah!* You could write pages on just that one line.

When he was bringing out *Born in the U.S.A.*, he called me. He was in New York, at the Hit Factory. He said, "Come on down, I want to do something." So I went to the studio. He said, "I've got a couple songs I want to run by you." He played "Shut Out the Light," which was the flip side of the 45, "Born in the U.S.A." It was about a vet who came back, all that stuff. Then he played "Born in the U.S.A." It was loud, wrap-around sound, pumped up, reverberating. BOOM! It was powerful. I got goosebumps. He said, "What do you think?" I said, "it's a rockin' song!" Over the years, whenever he plays it, he says that from start to finish, it's full-throttle, all-out. No holding back.

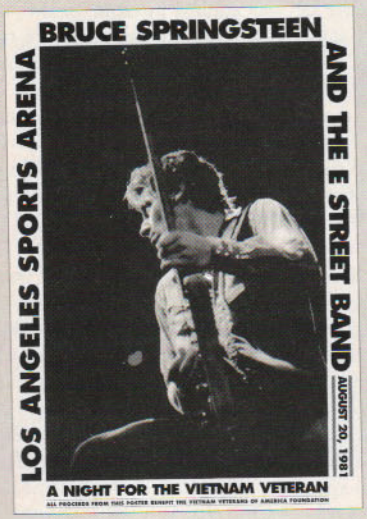
But "Shut Out the Light" was not appreciated for the power that it had. If you listen, there's a lot eof motion in that song. "Born in the U.S.A." was obviously a kick in the ass, but so was "Shut Out the Light."

Legend has it that the last line of "Born in the U.S.A." concerns you: "I'm a cool rocking daddy in the U.S.A."

I lay claim to be the "cool rocking daddy." ABC News did a profile and we talked about Bruce and his involvement. And I said, "Yeah, I'm the 'cool rocking daddy.'" [laughs] The correspondent was like,

L.A. 1981: THE STAND

The Vets show stands alone for its intensity and passion, but the other five concerts in the six-show run featured outstanding performances and setlists of dizzying variety. In the end, more than 50 songs had floated in and out of the set, including one-offs like Woody Guthrie's "Deportee," the only tour appearance of "Rave On," and a note-perfect cover of CCR's "Proud Mary."



Below is the full set list from **AUGUST 20.** Other nights' highlights and rarities follow.

WHO'LL STOP THE RAIN
PROVE IT ALL NIGHT
THE TIES THAT BIND
DARKNESS ON THE EDGE OF TOWN
BYE BYE JOHNNY
INDEPENDENCE DAY
TRAPPED
TWO HEARTS
OUT IN THE STREET
THE PROMISED LAND
THE RIVER
THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND
BADLANDS
THUNDER ROAD
HUNGRY HEART
YOU CAN LOOK (BUT YOU BETTER NOT TOUCH)
CADILLAC RANCH
SHERRY DARLING
JOLE BLON
WRECK ON THE HIGHWAY
RACING IN THE STREET
CANDY'S ROOM
RAMROD
ROSALITA
JUNGLELAND
BALLAD OF EASY RIDER
BORN TO RUN
DETROIT MEDLEY w/ YOU CAN'T SIT DOWN/SWEET SOUL MUSIC/SHAKE
TWIST AND SHOUT

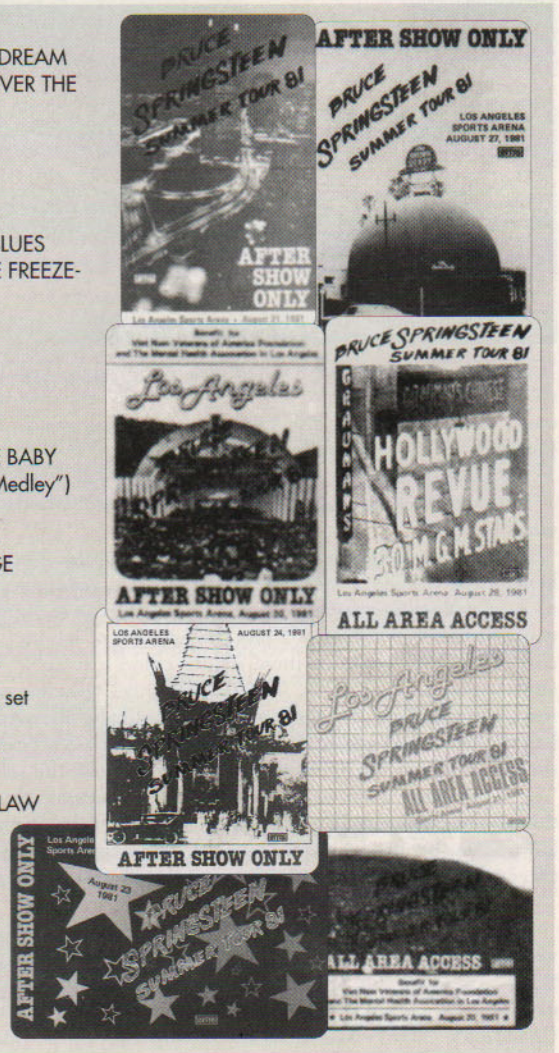
AUGUST 21
FOLLOW THAT DREAM
ROCKIN' ALL OVER THE WORLD
FOR YOU
POINT BLANK

AUGUST 23
SUMMERTIME BLUES
TENTH AVENUE FREEZE-OUT
FACTORY
FIRE
STOLEN CAR
BACKSTREETS
RAVE ON
SOCK IT TO ME BABY (in "Detroit Medley")

AUGUST 24
JACKSON CAGE
GROWIN' UP
JERSEY GIRL

AUGUST 27
A solid 29-song set

AUGUST 28
DEPORTEE
I FOUGHT THE LAW
PROUD MARY
QUARTER TO THREE



LEFT: IRIS SCHNEIDER/LOS ANGELES TIMES PHOTO; ABOVE: PETE HOWARD PHOTOS

"Come on." So she went out and did an interview with Bruce, and she said, "You know, Bobby says he's the 'cool rocking daddy.' Is that true?" Bruce chuckles and says, "Yeah!" Like, what's he gonna say? [laughs]

Take me back to that night in Los Angeles. The lights go down, what happens?

I remember feeling a lot of energy in that arena. I reminded myself: keep it clear, keep it short. Hearing it again today, pointing out that rock 'n' roll is the symbol of our generation, was really what came forward. It was true, because I had the position of having access to... the corporate elite. None of them would come forward, save for Bundy and the Ford Foundation. The defense guys were horrific... None of the guys that had the responsibility politically for what went down had any sense of obligation to those who had paid a price as a result of their policies. Having gotten to the point to make the ask and getting a "no" from these political leaders and defense contracting firms... fuck them! The fact that it was rock 'n' roll, the fact that it was Springsteen. That broke the silence. It said, "It's okay, you can do this." The place just erupted, and Bruce jumped right into the song.

It was "Who'll Stop the Rain." Let me read what Robert Hilburn wrote in the *Los Angeles Times*: "Springsteen and the six-piece E Street Band at the Sports Arena opened with the same song they used to kick things off during the rainstorm last Sunday in Denver, Creedence Clearwater's 'Who'll Stop the Rain.' Only this time Springsteen didn't offer it as a wink at climatic conditions. In its purest form, the John Fogerty composition is an outcry against injustice. With dozens of Vietnam Veterans sitting in wheelchairs to the sides of the stage Thursday the song became a forceful complaint against the way much of the country has turned its backs on victims of that unpopular war."

Do you recall hearing that particular song that night?

I remember hearing it, but I had just addressed an audience of whatever it was, 15,000 people. I was in the process of having multiple orgasms! [laughs] I was right on the side, on the platform, with other vets in wheelchairs.

We got together at the end of the show, and Bruce said to me, "you know Bobby, I didn't sleep last night. The idea of going in front of an audience without my guitar was so scary that I couldn't sleep. I kept thinking, 'what am I going to say?'"

He continued: "When you said what you said, when you turned to hand me the mic and I grabbed it from you, I was totally drained, completely exhausted. I didn't really know if I was going to be able to pull it off tonight." And he rallied. He did it.

Let me come back to something, because one of the things I would like to say is how extraordinary I regard Bruce Springsteen, what a debt we owe this guy. We'd go out, because we got to be friends, and we'd get together on a regular basis. He would be the quiet guy at the table. He would listen. The fact that he was such a humble guy, that he would take in what was being said by others was unbelievable to me. He has done an unbelievable job of getting a breadth of understanding about human experience.

This wasn't a one night, wham-bam, thanks, goodbye. The fact that he maintained a relationship, the fact that he kept an eye on how we were doing and stepped up several times, quietly, sometimes not being asked, just to give us continuing support, is remarkable. It was done very quietly and privately.

Had you not nearly lost your life fighting in Vietnam, would you have been an activist?

I would have come home and shut up. I would not be an activist. I'm pretty confident of that. Because I was a casualty, I had license to speak. I had paid a price, I was visible, and that allowed me the right to speak to it. Maybe even in my own mind. But I knew other guys I'd spoken to and I said, "Hey, you know, speak out!" They couldn't, because of what it would mean to do so for those who died or others who paid a real price. Nobody can speak for the dead. But I can speak for the wounded.

GOOD MEN THROUGH THE AGES
AUGUST '81 IN CONTEXT • BY JIM CULLEN

ABRAHAM LINCOLN HAD A DILEMMA. The newly elected member of the House of Representatives was deeply opposed to the Mexican War, seeing the conflict as a reckless betrayal of American ideals. At the same time, he believed he had an obligation to vote in favor of sending additional men and supplies to protect the soldiers at the front who were already risking their lives for their country. In resolutions he presented to Congress, Lincoln tried to point out the problematic nature of American involvement, asking the President of the United States to clarify just where the spot was that Americans had supposedly been attacked by Mexicans. But most of his colleagues and the major newspapers ignored him—except some back home, which ridiculed him as "Spotty" Lincoln. A Democrat won his seat in the next election, and Lincoln went back to Illinois, doubting he had a future in politics. Running for U.S. Senate a decade later, his opponent Stephen Douglas closed their final debate by asserting that "it is one thing to be opposed to the declaration of a war, another and very different thing to take sides with the enemy after the war has been commenced."

NEAL PRESTON PHOTO

For most Americans of the time, the politics of the Mexican War were simple: you were either for the war, or you were against it. Any other position was widely viewed as at best prevaricating, at worst dishonest. It seemed that way in the 1960s, too: you either supported our troops in Vietnam, or you were a traitor to America: Love it or Leave it. There were patriotic Americans who opposed the war; in fact, some were veterans (a few, like John Kerry and Bob Kerrey, would eventually end up in Congress.) But it took a while for them to find their voices and still longer for others to hear them.

The sense of silence we associate with the immediate aftermath of Vietnam was not unique, either. Veterans of the Civil War, North and South, often experienced a sense of isolation in the postwar era, nursing wounds that were as often psychic as they were physical. Not until the 1890s did memoirs, reunions, and other forms of commemoration surge from a trickle to a flood. And even when there was remembrance, much of it was whitewashed, even antiseptic. "The real war will never get in the books," a disgusted Walt Whitman, who had nursed soldiers and walked battlefields, wrote in 1882. Writers who tried to describe the real war—among them veterans John DeForest and Ambrose Bierce, whose highly graphic fiction remains disturbing to this day—were widely overlooked until much later.

Attempts to grapple with the legacy of the Vietnam war for the veterans who fought it also came from popular culture. At one extreme, the pro-war position was staked out in *The Green Berets* (1967), starring John Wayne, the only film about Vietnam released during the conflict. Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979) was a strong antiwar film, though Coppola was less interested in engaging the experience of ordinary soldiers than in making analogies between American imperialism and the European variety described in Joseph Conrad's 1905 novel *Heart of Darkness,* on which the film is based. Among the first examples of such an engaged perspective was Michael Cimino's *The Deer Hunter* (1978), which depicted the horrors of the war as experienced by once-naive Americans who would nevertheless sing "God Bless America" with tragic conviction in the final scene of the movie. A similar sense of complexity was apparent in Hal Ashby's *Coming Home,* released earlier that year.

But in 1981, five years after Ron Kovic's *Born on the Fourth of July* was published, such a perspective was still relatively unusual. It was the morning of the Reagan era, an era in which love of country was typically conflated with conservative ideology, which in turn viewed Vietnam as a war that could have, and should have, been won. The standard war songs in the rock canon, by contrast—Country Joe and the Fish's "Fixin' to Die Rag"; Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Fortunate Son"—were militant products of the 60s. Dissent was no longer fashionable.

In this immediate cultural climate, Bruce Springsteen's decision to play benefit concerts to help Vietnam vets was a little unusual—and surprising. Springsteen had been relatively diffident at the MUSE concerts two years before. Now, however, he fused words and deeds in remarkably focused and effective activism. In so doing, he revitalized a tradition of principled patriotism that resonated through the surface of narcissistic disco and cynical punk into the heart of American history.

In the aftermath of the concerts, a new climate seemed to emerge in American life, a climate where Billy Joel's "Goodnight Saigon" and Charlie Daniels's "Still in Saigon" (both 1982) were widely heard and films like *Platoon* (1986) and *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989) were widely seen. And in the middle of it all, of course, was *Born in the U.S.A.*

"Let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle and his widow, and his orphan," Abraham Lincoln declared in his Second Inaugural Address. Lincoln did not distinguish between winners and losers in that speech. In his life and work, Springsteen has honored that tradition.

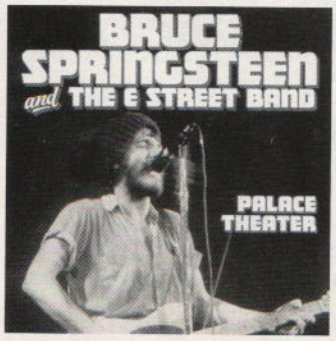
Jim Cullen is the author of Born in the USA: Bruce Springsteen and the American Tradition. *His latest book is* Restless in the Promised Land: Catholics and the American Dream.

ON COLLECTING

By Richard Breton and Fred Mills

For the benefit of our readers, *Backstreets* magazine provides ratings of unauthorized releases currently in circulation. Don't write us asking where these can be obtained. *Backstreets* in no manner, shape, or form endorses these recordings. These reviews are provided by our columnists solely for informational purposes. Despite these words of warning, some collectors will still seek this material out, and for those collectors, our reviews should help you steer clear of the real losers.

Unauthorized CDs are growing in numbers and with that growth, expect some real ripoffs—our advice is let the buyer beware, and demand to listen to material before you buy it. Each title here has been rated for packaging, performance, and sound quality on a scale from one to ten, one being awful, and ten being quality generally found on legitimate releases.



•Palace Theater
(Wild Card, 2CD)
Sound 7
Performance: 9
Packaging: 6

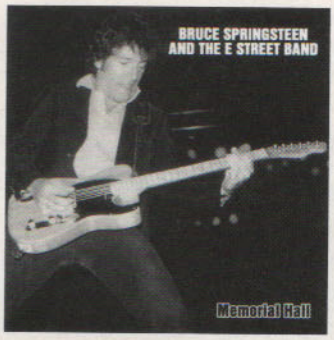
Were this a regular review, we'd first tout its status as a very-nice-for-the-time "previously unbooted soundboard" followed by kudos for featuring "some real goodies, setlist-wise." But as you may already suspect, this is not a regular review. It is, as we might say of certain Australian table wines, one that comes with a warning.

First, turn to last issue's review of Palace's *Arena Rock*, credited to Philly, October 25, 1976. Now consider comments regarding that set by one sharp-eared collector, Willie Major, who initially posted to the Internet's Luckytown Digest and later had a dialogue with *Backstreets*: "It's a fake. The bootlegger has grafted Ed Sciaky's introduction onto another soundboard recording, and then used the encores from the (quite good) 10/25/76 audience recording. The board is one that has circulated for years under this date and many others, being the source for other CDs such as *Streets of Life* and *Down in Jungleland Vol. 1* as well as old vinyl boots *Cry Me a River, Live in Philadelphia Vols. I & II,* and *Streets of Fire.* No one knows the actual date of this recording, but it is certainly not the 10/25/76 show. I probably never would have noticed except that I spent a lot of time mastering the audience 10/25 to CD and then dubbed *Arena Rock,* so when I heard it I had the show fresh in my mind."

What does *Arena Rock* have to do with Wild Card's *Palace Theater*? An A-B comparison indicates that the same board recording comprises the bulk of both sets. Not counting some of the tracks on *Arena Rock*—it includes obviously different versions of "Sandy," "Raise Your Hand" and "Born to Run" while adding "A Fine Fine Girl" and "The Promise"—we're looking at the same "mystery source" for both titles. Wild Card mostly likely de-noised the tape, as its version is notably less hissy/crackly, yielding a cleaner sound, albeit one now with less dynamic range, substantially lacking in high end.

Palace Theater purports to be the August 21, 1976 show from Waterbury, CT. Setlist-wise, it deviates slightly from that of the known 8/21/76 audience tape in circulation, which has "Born to Run" between "She's the One" and "Something In the Night"; here, it's between "Rosalita" and "Sandy," with clearly audible insert edits. The reasoning for this is not clear, since no time restrictions for either Disc 1 (61:54) or 2 (44:51) would make a song order shuffle necessary.

So we now know for sure that the board tape is not 10/25, and that it's probably not 8/21, either. What's the actual source? No one seems to have the answer. The *Backstreets* staff definitely agrees that this mysterious '76 board does sound very good—good enough to generate numerous erroneously-labeled boots over the years (something also alluded to in the *Streets of Life* review in Volume 1 of Lynn Elder's *You Better Not Touch* bootleg guide.) Is *Palace Theater* worth picking up, then? Musically, yes. And if you're of an investigative mindset, it might even offer you a challenge. —*FM*



•Memorial Hall
(Palace, 2CD-R)
Sound: 7-8
Performance: 9
Packaging: 7

Perhaps aiming to make up for its incorrectly billed *Arena Rock* (reviewed last issue, see comments elsewhere in this section), Palace very studiously outlines the origins of its June 16, 1978 Kansas City tapes in brief liner notes: "This set is derived from two separate source tapes, the first seven tracks taken from a superb audience recording—the remaining tracks are from a very nice soundboard." Which almost sums up what you get. While far from "superb," with a boomy bottom end, the audience tracks are quite good: very clear vocals, little crowd noise, and a generally "hot" ambiance. The soundboard portion betrays some subtle tapehead misalignment, with slight dropouts and the telltale variations in high end definition; however, there's very little tape hiss, and no distortion to speak of, either.

An incomplete board of the show has circulated in tapers' circles for some time; this presumably is the same one, as it includes the faded-in (incomplete) "Rosalita" as well as subtle between-song edits. The online "Brucebase" database of setlists additionally indicates that the concert's first three songs ("Badlands," "Night," "Spirit in the Night") exist from an audience tape of good quality. Given that there's a noticeable gap between tracks three and four here, it's possible that the Palace release actually utilized not one but two tapes for the seven-song audience portion (some detectives out there may want to tackle this one).

All that aside, "Adam Raised a Cain" and an 11-minute "Quarter To Three" leave you gasping for breath. Also present is "The Promise," nicely wrought, if at a rather low volume. So this gets a moderate thumbs-up: a good '78 show to listen to and enjoy, if not one that'll replace your well-worn faves from the tour. —*FM*

•The Same Old Played Out Scenes
(Doberman, 3CD-R)
Sound: 8-9
Performance: 10
Packaging: 9

Once again a label makes a pass at the September 30, 1978, Atlanta Fox Theater concert. As with several other *Darkness* shows that are now considered classics, it was broadcast live. Radio listeners in Atlanta (as well as down in Florida and in parts of Texas) were privy to an exciting 23-song celebration; unfortunately, bad weather throughout the region resulted in poor FM reception, and all known tapes subsequently yielded flawed bootlegs. Didn't anyone at the radio station dub a pre-broadcast feed? No matter—Doberman's effort is impressive, to say the least.

Detailed liners indicate that four different source tapes were used; the label relied heavily on the '92 Turtle Records' CD edition *Here's to Ya* (parts 1-3), but, says Doberman, "with certain songs that were either edited or suffer major disruption replaced by the best possible alternate recording." And, one might note with relief, with decent and tasteful period-appropriate art-

work replacing the crap that graced the old Turtle sets. (The *Here's to Ya* discs "boasted" elaborately designed digipacks, featuring photos from several eras, including *Nebraska*, *Born in the U.S.A.* and *Tunnel of Love*, as well some bizarre pieces of nude female art.)

The sound on the Doberman set is mostly VG to EX broadcast quality throughout. Only a few instances of distortion or interference are audible, the most noticeable ones coming right at the first during a channel volume fluctuation during "Good Rocking Tonight" (which, on *Here's to Ya*, was joined in progress) and again with some fuzziness during the second song, "Badlands." Sound quality improves immediately after, in "Spirit in The Night." A judicious edit appears between "Thunder Road" and "Jungleland"; two others, also subtle, come during the extended intro for "Rosalita" and then again at song's end (the tune was simply an incomplete version on earlier boots). The compilers opted to fade out/in during the crowd noise between "Candy's Room" and "Because the Night," and between "She's the One" and "Backstreets," presumably due to switching tape sources.

In short, this is the kind of musical resurrection and sonic restoration that gives bootleggers, *abem*, a good name. Why settle for a historical artifact that you can't listen to and enjoy when modern technology can tame extant flaws? Finally this '78 date can join the ranks of its FM peers. It's got all the great stuff: "Independence Day," "Prove It All Night," "Point Blank," the extended "She's the One," versions of "Night Train" and "Raise Your Hand." And while not sonically flawless, it's pretty damn good. —*FM*

•Once Upon a Time in... Paris
(Anubis, 2CD-R)
Sound: 7
Performance: 8
Packaging: 8

On the European leg of *The River* tour, Bruce truly went from just an American artist to break through to the rest of the world in a significant way. This 27-song set is taken from the first of two shows in Paris, France at the Palais des Sports Sain-Ouen on April 18, 1981. It's still very early in the European tour, and Bruce is just beginning to warm to the overseas audiences. As *River* shows go, this one is rather short, relatively speaking—at only 2 hours and 20 minutes long—but typical of the early European shows.

Of note, this show opens with "Factory" and includes the tour debut of the Elvis Presley classic "Can't Help Falling in Love" as well as the European tour premier of "Candy's Room." Outside of these songs, the rest pretty much represent the core *River* tour set.

While taken from an audience tape, the remastered stereo sound is very clean and clear—still with some tape hiss, but better than a lot of other audience tapes of this tour. In short, the results are better than the generally circulating tapes of this show. On the other hand, the bonus track—a second version of "Rockin' All Over the World" from an unknown date/location—should have been left off as it sounds horrible. No amount of mastering could save this track. But as faults go, Anubis (distributed by Piggham) could have done much worse.

The booklet and back cover are better than expected, although the reprints of (mostly various fan magazine) articles are just for show—I wouldn't recommend trying to read any without a decent microscope. Unfortunately, the picture discs are a step down from their previous effort.

There may be better concerts from this leg (Stockholm comes to mind), but this is a perfect example of the early European shows. —*RB*

the backstreets jukebox

1. Bruce Springsteen
"My City of Ruins"
live recording (9/21/01)

2. Bruce Springsteen
"We Shall Overcome"
Where Have All the Flowers Gone (Appleseed)

3. Bruce Springsteen
"This Land is Your Land"*
"Chimes of Freedom"*
"Souls of the Departed"
"Land of Hope and Dreams"*
*with the E Street Band
official catalog (Columbia)

4. Little Steven
"I Am a Patriot"
Voice of America (EMI)

5. Frank Sinatra
"The House I Live In"
The Main Event: Live (Reprise)

6. Pearl Jam & Neil Young
"Long Road"
MerkinBall EP (Epic)

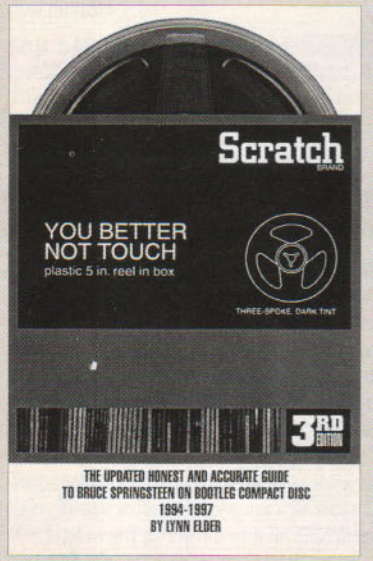
7. Marvin Gaye
"The Star Spangled Banner"
The Master: 1961-'84 (Motown)

8. Patty Griffin
"Mary"
Flaming Red (A&M)

9. Ray Charles
"America the Beautiful"
Genius + Soul (Rhino)

10. Neil Young
"Rockin' in the Free World"
Freedom (Reprise)

10+ Songs to play today and every day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YOU BETTER NOT TOUCH VOL. 3

The third and latest volume in *Backstreets* reviewer Lynn Elder's series of guides to the bootleg CDs of Bruce Springsteen. Reviews nearly 200 Boss bootleg titles released after the publication of Volume 2, covering releases up through 1997. *YBNT3* also includes three appendices, including a chronological list of studio and live performances, noting titles on which they can be found. At a massive 232 pages, it's the biggest one yet by far. Exhaustive advice on Boss bootlegs and a resource no collector should be without. SALE PRICE: $15

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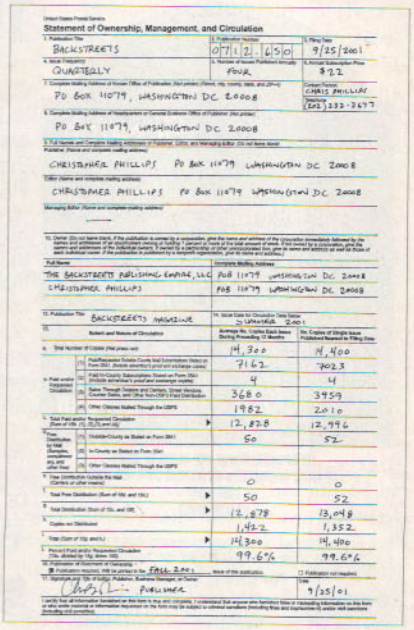
what can we teach them if everything in which we somehow believed has been thrown away in just a few seconds. Then I was reminded of some words I heard from Bruce during an interview he gave in Italy back in 1992, just after the L.A. riots: "I can tell my children that behind all the horror and the pain and the bad, in this world there's also a great beauty, and that they have to search for that in everything." And I also remembered the introduction to a song during the *Tom Joad* tour in Nice, in which he was talking about how music has been so important to him and how he fought against everything to reach his goal, throughout good and bad times, and when the things were going bad he just wrapped up everything he had and just kept on going. Then he started singing: "Tonight my bag is packed, tomorrow I'll walk these tracks, that lead me across the border." So if this little letter can somehow comfort you, just grab your ticket and your suitcase and keep on going.

Stefano Mazza
Milano, Italy

Earlier today a radio station in Philly played Bruce's song "My City of Ruins" I cannot begin to tell you my feelings as the song played. I know Bruce wrote this song about Asbury Park, but you can feel he could have been singing about the events in New York yesterday. Bruce needs to release this single as a tribute to all those who lost their lives in this senseless act of terrorism. We as Americans will "rise up" and show everyone how proud and strong we are as Americans.

Glenn Saul
via e-mail



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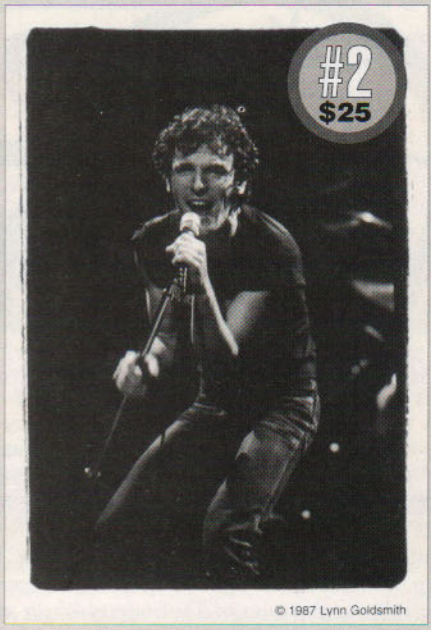

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Deliver Me From Nowhere

Across the Border

Like most storytellers, Springsteen typically works in linear strokes. Occasionally he'll take a more circular route. He once called "Born in the U.S.A." a song about the snake that came around to eat its tail. The character in that song travels 180 degrees—to the other side of the world—but ends up right back where he started, geographically and, at least in some ways, emotionally. On the *Ghost of Tom Joad* tour, Springsteen brought things around thematically by opening with the title song's vision of *The Grapes of Wrath*, and closing the main set with a monologue about a heartbreak scene from the John Ford film of the book before playing "Across the Border." But more often, Springsteen moves in a line, as in, say, "Backstreets" or "The River." To advance a storyline, particularly in the travel songs that are so common in Springsteen's catalog, it helps to go from point A to D in the traditional order rather than scattering about, stream-of-consciousness style.

You don't get much more linear than the concept for "Across the Border," a song that would have made the ideal closer for *The Ghost of Tom Joad* if Springsteen hadn't tacked two songs better-suited as B-sides after it. The singer in the track talks to himself and his love about an immigrant journey they'll begin the next morning. While the disc opens with a title song about going nowhere ("The highway is alive tonight / Nobody's kiddin' nobody about where it goes"), here it details a specific journey. Springsteen puts you on a path from the first: "Tomorrow I'll walk these tracks / That will lead me across the border."

Springsteen has long employed crossing rivers and borders as a metaphor for lessons learned. In fact, when you consider that by the time of *The Ghost of Tom Joad* (1995), he'd already used the river-crossing image numerous times—in "Meeting Across the River," "This Hard Land," "With Every Wish," along with covers of "Many Rivers to Cross" and even "Jersey Girl" (and he's since used it again in "American Skin")—it's impressive that he was able to bring a freshness to it with "Across the Border."

In this song, the border being crossed isn't necessarily a river, but there is water waiting on the other side. And that water imagery is precisely what tightens the song, because like the characters in it, it follows a progression.

"We'll leave behind my dear / The pain and sadness we found here / And we'll drink from the Bravo's muddy water," the singer imagines in the first verse. The water here is brown to ground the song in hard reality early on. But by the second verse, the singer and his love look into an idyllic future in their new land: "Sweet blossoms fill the air / Pastures of gold and green / Roll down into cool, clear waters." By the song's end they are looking at the great beyond. "For what are we / Without hope in our hearts / That someday we'll drink from God's blessed waters?" the singer asks.

Springsteen alters his description of water in a purposeful, linear fashion: from muddy river, to crystal spring, to heavenly fountain. And in doing so, he takes us on a journey that subtly undergirds his characters' hunger to make it across the border. By linking the passage over the border to that final passage into heaven, he pulls in the bulk of his listeners who are not on immigrant journeys, but who are nonetheless pilgrims making their way through their own travels.

By Chris Nelson

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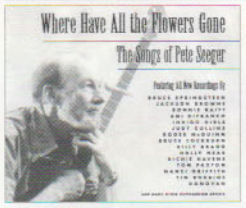

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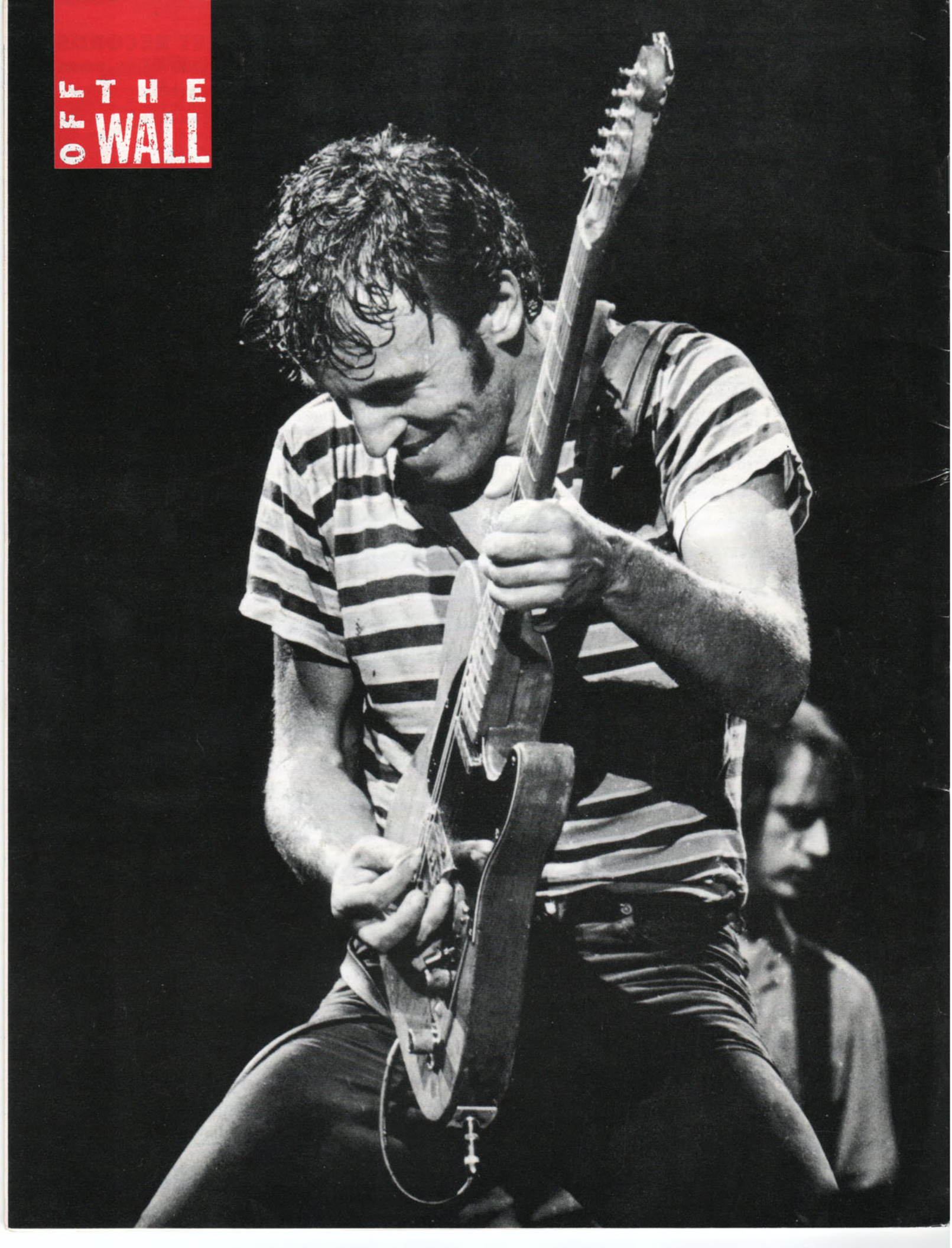
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